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MONKEY TAIL

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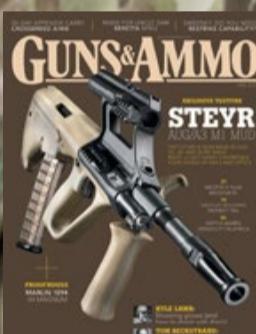
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READER BLOWBACK



BOND ARMS

I think you missed the boat on why the Bond Arms derringer shoots the top barrel higher than the bottom. When the bottom barrel fires, the recoil force is pretty much straight back into the hand through the center of the gun. When the top barrel fires, the recoil force is from the top of the gun; the gun rotates up in the hand, causing the bullet to exit pointed slightly up. The faster bullet is in the barrel a shorter amount of time, meaning less time for the gun to rotate. See anything wrong with this reasoning?

Rick Neale
Norton, Ohio

Rick, you are correct that, due to a low bore axis, the recoil from the bottom barrel causes the gun to come straight back in your hand, and because the top barrel has a higher bore axis, it will slightly rotate up with the recoil. Slower bullets such as the .45 Colt will have a wider spread, whereas faster ones such as the .357 Mag. will be much closer together. The way the gun is designed is that the bottom barrel is lined up with the sights; the top barrel, even when braced, will still shoot slightly high since the bores are parallel and only one can be lined up with the sights.

— Gordon Bond,
Bond Arms

DUUUUUUUUDE!

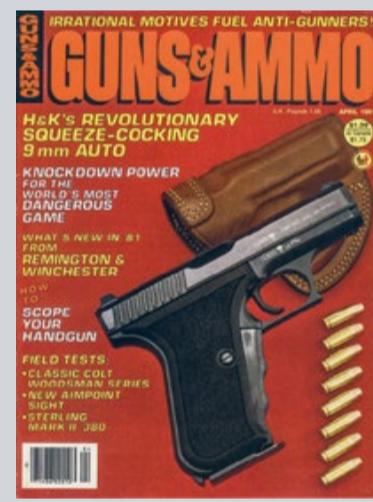
It would seem to me that it is entirely possible that there are a substantial

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amount of readers like me who are not college educated, Mr. Sweeney. I am referring to a statement published in your February column "How To Be A Gunwriter," regarding his recommendation for having a college education. The lack of a college degree has not adversely affected my ability to shoot and enjoy all kinds of firearms for well over 50 years. I am every bit as much of a professional as you, Mr. Sweeney. It has been my pleasure to have been a union plumber/pipefitter for 35 years. Along with this, I have been an apprentice instructor for the last 15 years. Words carry a lot of weight and, along with that, responsibility. I would bet that there are quite a few professional "surfer dudes" who would take notice of Mr. Sweeney alluding to their intelli-

APRIL '81

Originally known as the "Police Self-loading Pistol," or PSP, this unusual Heckler & Koch 9mm was redesignated the P7 once it was adopted for service by the West German police. Though it wasn't technically a new handgun in 1981, it was first imported to the U.S. market that year, gaining enough interest for April's cover story. No manual safety lever was included in this design. Instead, as much as 11 pounds of pressure was required to squeeze the cocking lever to ready the striker for firing. HK discontinued production of all subsequent variants in 2008.



gence. The decision to stop enjoying G&A, which has been a part of my life for years, is not an easy one. This being said, I will not renew or buy your publication from the newsstand.

anonymous
email

My comment was not meant to insult surfers; just the opposite. The unending emphasis on every student going to college and getting a degree, regardless of the subject matter, is a real problem. Instead of a student who shows mechanical

aptitude going to school to learn welding, machine repair, etc., he or she is encouraged to go to college and get a "modern" degree. Here I'll be clear whom I'm insulting: Anyone who thinks a degree in gender studies (just to pick one) is going to help when it comes time for job interviews is going to be sorely mistaken and heavily in debt. When I want my (fill in the blank) fixed, I want someone like you, who has learned through field experience and has satisfied customers to prove it.

— P. Sweeney

GOOD BALANCE IN G&A

As a long-time subscriber to GUNS & AMMO, I would like to commend you and the entire staff for producing such an enjoyable, well-written, entertaining magazine. Having just read your "Reader Blowback" column in the January issue, it never ceases to amaze me when so-called firearms enthusiasts take exception with the percentage of features covering this or that type of firearm. I love to read about all firearms, those I use and own, may someday use or own, and the ones I will never own. Likewise, I love to read about exotic hunts and safaris that in all likelihood I will never experience firsthand; that's just the point. I am just as interested in ammo and ballistics as

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The new multi-configurable AUG A3 M1 variant of the Steyr's venerable bullpup platform marks the introduction of MUD and the return of OD Green to its stock color options and adds new features like a front Quick-Disconnect Sling Swivel to classic characteristics like the quick-detach 16-inch barrel and battle-proven short-stroke gas-piston operation. It is available in Short-Rail, High-Rail and Integrated Optic versions with either a 1.5X or 3X scope. At 28.15 inches, Y SBR?

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well as optics, holsters and gun-care products. No other publication even comes close to covering all of these facets of the firearms world. Thanks again for a job well done.

Albert Sophia
Warren, Michigan

Hecho en México
Aguila ammunition is about to become more available than ever.

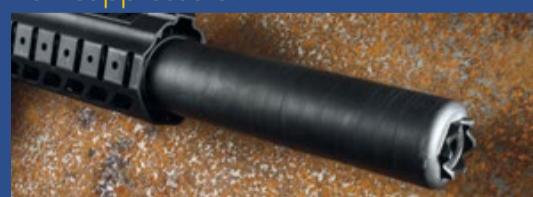
Since Aguila's introduction to the U.S. market in 2009, the company has steadily increased its presence in the U.S. market. The company's success is due to its commitment to quality and reliability. Aguila ammunition is manufactured in Mexico, using state-of-the-art technology and strict quality control measures. The company's focus is on providing high-quality ammunition at competitive prices. Aguila ammunition is available in a variety of calibers, including .223 Remington, 5.56x45mm NATO, 7.62x39mm, 9mm Luger, and .45 ACP. The company's commitment to quality and reliability has made Aguila ammunition a popular choice for both civilian and military users.

SOUTH-OF-THE-BORDER RESTRICTIONS

The article on Aguila Ammunition in the January 2015 issue was troubling to me. I have nothing against Aguila specifically or imported ammo in general. As the article unfolds, it is stated that "firearms are heavily restricted in Mexico." Then it is further stated, "Since legal gun ownership is highly restricted and controlled by the Secretariat of National Defense (SEDENA), legally shooting a firearm is a privilege that few Mexican citizens enjoy." Of course, that didn't stop author Alfredo Rico and Patrick Sweeney from shooting up a bunch of Aguila ammo, including running 9mm through a full-auto carbine. Then they junketed over to Acapulco to a "private shooting range" to enjoy the

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scenery and shotgunning that I am sure 99 percent or more of the citizens of Mexico could never experience. I guess it's no different than New York, Connecticut or Massachusetts, where many U.S.-manufactured firearms are made but the citizens of those states cannot enjoy the products they are making. Things here at home trouble me, too. The article just smacked of political cronyism and privilege that rubbed me the wrong way. There. I got that off my chest.

Alan Dickinson
email

In a way, I'm glad the privilege I enjoyed was irksome, because highly restrictive federal firearm regulations that make this attainable by a few should be deplored.

However, my opportunities had little to do with class or political privilege. The on-site range at the Tecnos facility is private by definition. Also, Tecnos has an established history of supporting international shooting events at the Acapulco range. The fact is, being a media professional in the firearms industry opens up many shooting opportunities that I would not normally have if I were in a different profession.

The disparity between my professional opportunities and my regular life is always clear when I return home to California and contend with bullet buttons, magazine capacity restrictions and the California DOJ roster of approved firearms.

— A. Rico

SCOPE EYE

While watching R. Lee Ermey demonstrate a Barrett .50 BMG rifle on a TV program, the scope was unusually mounted with the rear ocular close to his eye. The recoil left a crescent-shaped gash between the Gunny's eyes. On hard-kicking rounds, what's wrong with using a scout scope?

Frank Horn
Bushland, Texas

You are correct. The long-eye-relief, forward-mounted "scout" scope absolutely cures the problem of "magnum eyebrow." There is no real formula because it depends so much on physical size, experience and, above all, the shooting position, but it really is pretty simple: The more recoil you are dealing with, the more eye relief you need.

— C. Boddington

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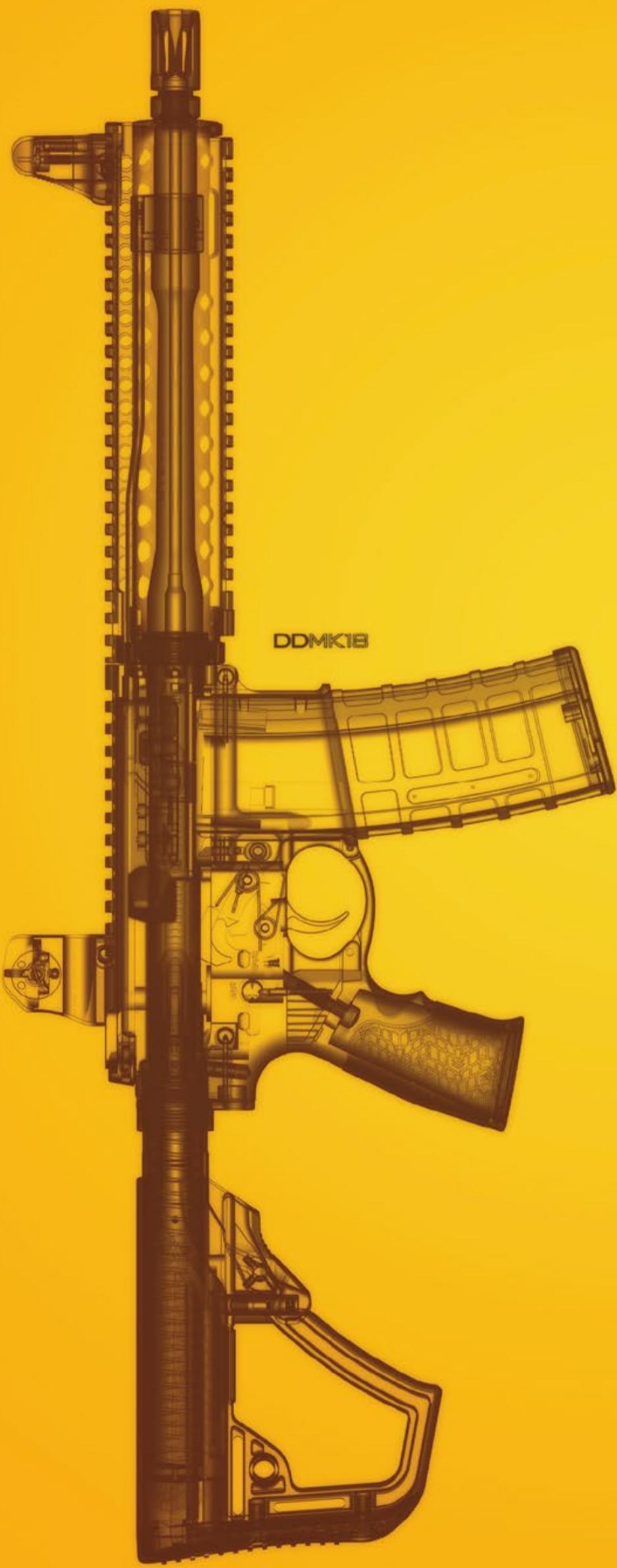
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ERIC R. POOLE

 @BLACK5PROJECTS

THE SHOT SHOW BUZZ

FOR MOST, JANUARY 1ST IS THE DATE that rings in the New Year and marks the starting line of well-intended resolutions. Such is not the case for me. Rather, the first day of the NSSF's annual SHOT Show is when I decide to hit the reset button.

Working on several different magazines in the midst of three holidays, the fourth quarter of any year is the busiest time for Guns & Ammo staff. Ironically, I find myself feeling refreshed at the sound of an airplane's wheels touching tarmac in Las Vegas, Nevada, the current home of the SHOT Show. Nearly 70,000 people convened for the 37th annual event with more than 1,600 exhibitors from around the world showcasing their latest wares. Here is a short list I made of what people left talking about:

CMMG Mk47 7.62x39 This rifle garnered a spotlight on our February newsstand cover and has been the talk of the town ever since. We're just now wrapping up our testing of CMMG's all-new Mk47 Mutant, and it is certainly living up to its hype. Important developments such as an enlarged bolt, a lower receiver designed to accept virtually all AK magazines and a KeyMod handguard just begin to scratch the surface of why the Mutant seems to stand apart from previous attempts to marry the AK47 with the ergonomics of an AR-15. No-stoppage full-auto mag dumps were heard on SHOT Show's Range Day and attracted the longest line of interest. Fox News even ran a story online about the Mutant, and the scuttlebutt hasn't stopped. You can check out Guns & Ammo's video preview at gunsandammo.com/first-look/first-look-cmmg-mk-47-mutant/ or visit cmmginc.com for more information.

CZ EVO 3 S1 9mm In my February editorial, I predicted the success of AR pistols following the ATF letter that said shouldering SIG Sauer's SB-15 did not constitute reclassification of the host firearm. However, before SHOT Show, the ATF announced it was going to pooh-pooh the SIG Brace that gave us all another reason to go out and buy an AR-type pistol. The ATF now indicates that none of us are supposed to combine the two and shoulder it. So, for now, it looks like we're back to longing for SBRs, coughing up \$200 for a tax stamp only to become a part of the

federal government's registry and sitting around for more than half a year. It's a shame, too, since I'm aware that CZ-USA developed an adapter for the SIG Brace. The CZ EVO 9mm was the most talked-about pistol at the 2015 SHOT Show. Perhaps its popularity was because it wasn't one of a hundred new 1911s, it's completely reliable and accurate, and it's not just a line extension from one of the other guys.

Benelli 828U 12 ga. In 2014, Benelli surprised us with the Ethos semiauto. For 2015, it appears it's on track to do it again with Benelli's first-ever over/under shotgun, hosting a number of unique features. Simply dipping an existing model in a Kryptek camo pattern won't be enough to unseat Benelli's current reign over shotgun innovation. If you haven't read it, I encourage that you dig out the last issue of Guns & Ammo, turn to page 64 and read Skip Knowles' review of the 828U in his feature "Art by Design."

PolyCase ARX The hit of SHOT Show was, hands down, Polycase's new Interceptor ARX bullet designed for self-defense. Yes, the company is known for its efforts to offer polymer case cartridges to the masses, but what really caught everyone's attention was the incredible hydrostatic shock seen on YouTube videos at the company's booth. Constructed of an injection-molded copper and polymer blend, the bullets are lead free, lightweight and faster than conventional bullets. The ARX flies farther on a flatter trajectory until it encounters soft tissue. Combined with directional energy, the unique grooves on the nose harness the rotational energy of the ARX bullet during the initial 6 inches of penetration, which then dumps massive quantities of energy quickly. Afterward, the bullet tumbles on a helical path, consistently creating a large temporary

cavity (up to 12 to 14 inches). You have to see it to believe it. Guns & Ammo staff will study this technology further, but this introduction could change a few opinions about self-defense ammunition. Check out polycaseammo.com.

I can't begin to touch on every product on hand at the SHOT Show, but you can find more coverage and exclusive videos at gunsandammo.com. **G&A**



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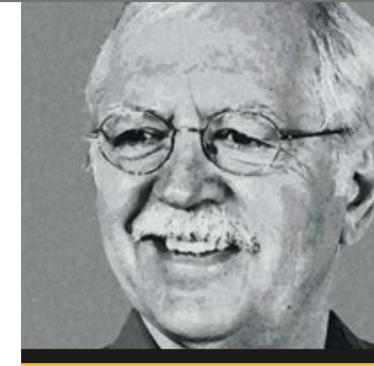
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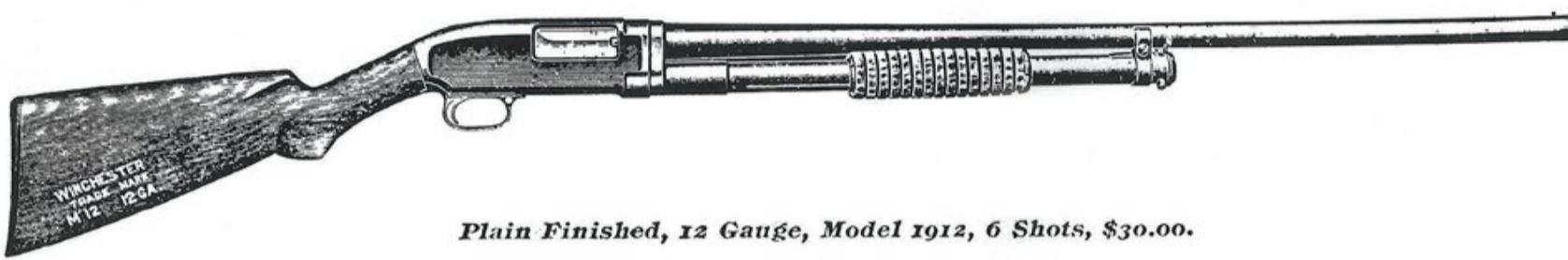
“While not of top-notch quality, it appears to be a good working gun. I trust the yard sale price was reasonable?”



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GARRY.JAMES@IMOUTDOORS.COM

IDENTIFICATION & VALUES



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SPECIAL-ORDER WINCHESTER MODEL 12?

Q: I have a 16-gauge Model 12 Winchester with a left-hand safety. The 24 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch barrel is marked "NICKEL STEEL. TRADE MARK WINCHESTER REG. IN U.S. PAT.OFF & FGN. MOD. 12-16GA. MOD./MANUFACTURED BY THE WINCHESTER REPEATING ARMS CO. NEW HAVEN CONNECTICUT. U.S.A. PAT. JULY 21.1896. FEB 22 JUNE 14.1898. SEPT. 7.1909 MAY 17.24.31. JUNE 7.14.28. JULY 5.12. 1910. JULY 22. 1913." Behind the triggerguard is the number 70. The stock has a rubber pad that looks like it was done at the factory. The buttstock, counting the pad, is 14 inches long. The gun is 45 inches long from the pad to the end of the barrel. The serial number is 286XXX. Is this a special order? Hope you can help.

G.G.

Metropolis, Illinois

A: Sounds fairly straightforward to me, unless there are some other remarkable features you haven't mentioned. Your Model 12 pump shotgun (which I am assuming has a 26-inch barrel — where did you measure it from?) was made in 1922. A total of 37,061 were built that year. Originally produced in 12 gauge, 16 gauge was offered beginning in 1914. The Model 12 was offered from 1912 to 1980. Eventually, 2,027,500 were made. Unfortunately, there's not much more I can add.

U.S. CONVERSION MUSKET

Q: I have what I believe is a .69-

caliber M1816 Type II rifle. It has a 4-inch barrel with a two-position rear sight. The buttplate and barrel-bands are stamped with "457." There is no eagle or shield on the lock. It is stamped "HARPERS FERRY 1859." The "5" appears to have been stamped over another number. Was this done at the time it was converted from flintlock

to percussion? Please tell me any other information you may know about this type of rifle and give me an estimate of its value if you can.

E.M.

email

A: It does indeed look like you have a Type II U.S. Model 1816 flintlock musket that has been converted to percussion using the bolster-style alteration whereby the rear of the original barrel was cut off near the breech and a new breech section incorporating the percussion drum was attached. There were four basic types of alterations, this one being deemed among the most satisfactory. The lock, which has had its flashpan removed and flintlock cock replaced with a percussion hammer, must have been renumbered (not commonly seen but not worth any kind of a premium), as 1816 production ceased in 1840. Your arm also ap-

THE AUCTION BLOCK

A rare engraved and silver-banded Colt "Texas" Paterson revolver sold for an impressive \$282,000, including premiums, at the November 14, 2014, Bonhams auction in San Francisco. This .36-caliber No. 5 Holster Model features a 6-inch barrel and original elephant ivory grips embellished with shell-pattern panels and silver escutcheons. Much of the revolver's original blued finish remains on the underside and some on the cylinder, with the remaining retaining traces of a thin blue, gray and brown patina. All in all, it's a spectacular example of its type. For more information about this and future sales, contact Bonhams, San Francisco, 800-223-2854, bonhams.com.



pears to have been rifled, as an 1855-style two-leaf rear sight has been added. This would not be usual in a smoothbore. The nipple also seems to have been replaced with an incorrect type. While the condition of your 1816 Conversion is not pristine, the gun at least looks to be complete. I'd value it in the \$1,500 to \$1,750 range.

SINGLE-SHOT SEMIAUTO?

Q: In reference to the September 2014 "Gun Room" "Winchester 55 Semiauto Single-Shot," for us low-information readers, what is a semiauto single-shot?

A.N., email

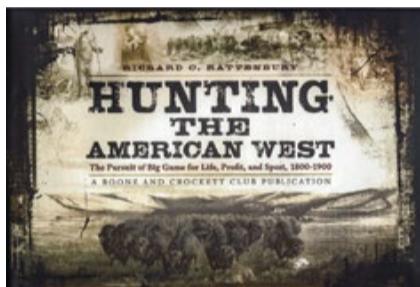
A: The Winchester Model 55 employed an odd single-shot, semiauto action, whereby a single round was loaded into the action, and when the gun was fired, the spent case was ejected automatically. The safety went on automatically when the gun was loaded and had to be manually disengaged before the gun could be fired. It was considered quite safe and reliable and was a good beginner's gun.

MODEL 1911 "X" SERIAL NUMBER

Q: I have asked several people, some of whom worked at Colt, about a serial number on a U.S.-issue 1911 I purchased more than 50 years ago. The serial number is X12XX. Can you tell me the significance of the "X" and in what year the gun was manufactured? I originally thought the year was 1911, but with the various answers I received,



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RECOMMENDED READS

"Hunting the American West: The Pursuit of Big Game for Life, Profit and Sport," By Richard O. Rattenbury; Boone & Crockett Club Publications, Missoula, MT; 2008; hardcover; 396 pages; \$49.95, or \$39.95 Associate Price

This is a remarkable publication on several levels. Without question, it is one of the most spectacularly illustrated tomes of its type to see print in recent years, combining superb period engravings, paintings and photographs with top-notch illustrations of hunting arms and gear of the 19th century, which are further illuminated by excellent captions. Lest one think this is just another sporting coffee-table book, rest assured its presentation carries it well beyond that category. Unlike many other lavishly illustrated histories, the text is authoritative, informative, erudite and entertaining. Its author is to be congratulated for producing a book that is both beautiful and a highly useful research tool. "Hunting the American West" and other fine publications can be ordered directly from the Boone & Crockett Club, booneandcrockettclub.com.

MORE ON VIETNAM REVOLVERS

Q: In your January 2015 "Gun Room" column, a reader asked about helicopter crews carrying Smith & Wesson .38 Special revolvers instead of .45 autos. I was in a CH-47 helicopter unit and served as an enlisted flight-crew member. Some of the pilots thought they would rather carry the .38. The revolvers I saw being carried were the Smith & Wesson Model 15 Combat Masterpiece. Maybe this will help R.D. of Yucaipa, California.

R.H.M., email

Q: The question from R.D. in Yucaipa, CA, in the January issue asks about U.S. Army helicopter pilots' carry guns. It is likely that they carried a Victory Model left over from World War II, unless they jumped on the Air Force bandwagon and purchased Model 15s. My father was a radio operator for the U.S. Air Force on an AWACS predecessor and mentioned on numerous occasions the "Combat Masterpiece" he was issued. I believe one of the same 15s served as a control in the JSSAP testing; it appears in several related photos of the test program in one of Ian Hogg's books.

M.W.R., Virginia

A: Gents: Many thanks for the added Vietnam/.38 S&W info. As noted in the January column and reaffirmed here, probably any number of different types of .38 S&Ws were seen, depending upon source and availability.

I'm not as sure now. The left side of the slide has patent dates going back to 1897 and the markings "COLTS PT. FA MFG CO HARTFORD CT USA." On the right side is "MODEL OF 1911 US ARMY."

**A.D.
Connecticut**

A: The "X" prefix on

your 1911's serial number indicates that it has been renumbered at the Springfield Armory in Massachusetts due to the fact that the pistol's original serial number was somehow effaced. This procedure was carried out by the armory from 1924 to 1953 with serial numbers ranging from X1000 to X4385.



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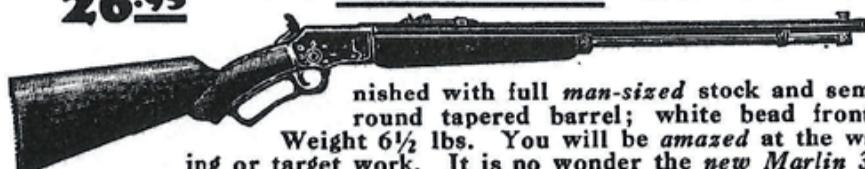
HAVE AN HEIRLOOM? Curious about a vintage firearm? Email Garry at garry.james@imoutdoors.com, or send a description with detailed photos to Gun Room, Guns & Ammo, 2 News Plaza, 3rd Floor, Peoria, IL 61614. Please include your name and state of residence.

Due to the volume of requests each month, personal replies are not possible. The most interesting or unusual queries are answered in Guns & Ammo magazine.

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MARLIN 39-A DATE

Q: My wife received a Marlin 39-A when her father passed last year. It originally came from her grandpa. Is there a way to determine the year of manufacture? Under the lever action is located the serial number, E-79XX. C.N.O.

email

A: Based on the “E” serial-number prefix, it appears that your wife’s Model 39-A was manufactured in 1948. It’s an excellent little rifle. The 39-A, which came out in 1939, was an improvement over the 39, introduced in 1922.

UNMARKED MAUSER SHORT RIFLE

Q: I recently bought what I thought at first looked to be an 1895 Chilean Short Rifle for the Chilean Mounted Police. It is almost like one my son has, but there are some anomalies. The odd part of this rifle is that there are no manufacturer’s markings at all, just the serial number, Y25XX, on the bolt handle, the left side of the receiver, the left side of the stock below the receiver and the magazine body. It has a gas vent at the receiver ring, a “lange”-style rear sight and a hinged floorplate. Someone lightly sanded the stock, but the serial number is still visible on it. I would really love to know what the heck it is. My son and I collect antique and obsolete military rifles, and we are particularly interested in pre-World War I Contract Mausers. This is a nice gun, and it shoots well. I hope you can help me with this. Thank you in advance.

N.M.S.

Lumberton, Texas

A: From what I can tell from your photos, it appears as though someone has removed all of your rifle's markings and refinished it. The full-length photo plus the 1896-looking tangent rear sight indicate that you have a Spanish Second-pattern Model 1916 Short Rifle (possibly modified later on). The 1916 was basically a shortened version of the Spanish Model 1893. This is as close as I can get.

CIVIL WAR AUSTRIAN RIFLE

Q: Please evaluate the attached pictures of the cap-and-ball rifle for manufacturer and value. The rifle has been passed down in my family for four generations. Unfortunately, my

father refinished the rifle. I could not find any readable maker's marks or other markings on the rifle. The overall length of the rifle is 52 inches. The barrel is 37 inches.

J.S.
Rocklin, California

A: Easy one. You have a Model 1854 Austrian Lorenz rifle. After the Pattern 1853 Enfield, this was the most widely imported foreign arm during the Civil War. Original caliber was .54, but many were reboored to .58 so they could fire the standard U.S. .58 Minie round. If you check the lock carefully, you may be able to discern a couple of numbers on it. If you do, add "18" at the front end, and that will give

you the date of manufacture. Your rifle appears to have seen better times, but it is sound and even has the original ramrod. I'd value it at around \$800 to \$950.

BELGIAN PERCUSSION PISTOL

Q: I've been a reader of your articles for two years, and this is my first time writing. I picked up this percussion cap pistol at a yard sale last summer and have been trying to find out more info on it. On the barrel, there is a circle with the letter "B" over "L G" inside the circle. A gentlemen at the gun club I belong to said he thinks it came from Belgium and that the barrel should be about .50 caliber. I was

wondering what the barrel is made of. The gun has all the original screws and some fancy scrolling. I do not see any serial numbers on the gun. Can you identify this gun and estimate its value?

G.K.
Stockholm, New Jersey

A: From your photos and description, you have a Belgian (the proofmark letters are actually "ELG") brass-framed, cannon-barreled pocket pistol made in 1840. While not of top-notch quality, it appears to be a good working gun. I trust the yard sale price was reasonable? From what I can see, the gun looks like it's worth a good, solid \$500 to \$650. **GA**

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“... you'll find no turnbolts on mine, not a single one.”



CRAIG BODDINGTON

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BUCKET LIST GUNS

SO, WHAT GUNS SHOULD YOU SHOOT before you cast off this earthly veil? I suppose such a list would be different for each of us, depending entirely on our interests and what we already have experience with. And, although I'm perhaps best known as a "bolt-action sporter" guy, you'll find no turnbolts on my list, not a single one. (However, there is one straight pull). At some level, they all seem fairly similar. Likewise semiautomatics. But then, I've shot most turnbolts and semiautos at least a little. There are a few guns on my list that I haven't actually fired, but they still remain interesting. Most of them I have shot, and I wouldn't mind doing it again (or watching someone else fire them). In no particular order, here's what comes to mind:

Colt Single Action Army Adopted in the service trials of 1872, the Colt SAA, also known as the "Peacemaker," is the most iconic of all revolvers and very possibly all handguns. Colt stopped production several times, but it always brought it back due to demand. There are a number of very good copies, and they're just as much fun to shoot, but at some point you need to shoot a real Colt. Sam Colt's engineers really got it right; few handguns ever made fit the hand as well as Colt's SAA. That said, with its topstrap groove for a rear sight and rounded front blade, it is not an easy handgun to shoot well. Actual accuracy is generally much better than most shooters are able to realize. In more powerful chamberings, such as the .45 Colt and .44-40, it's also a real handful.

And, although it's a six-shooter, there are

LETTERS FROM KEITH

"If you can pick up a pre-'64 model Winchester, you cannot beat it in a .338."
— Elmer Keith, January 1973



COLT SAA, .45 COLT, 7 1/2-IN. BARREL, COLOR CASE/BLUE \$1,416

good reasons why smart folks only load five and keep an empty chamber under the hammer. It's not a perfect pistol, but it is a perfect piece of history. Not being a Cowboy Action guy, I don't shoot mine much, but I've owned at least one for more than 40 years.

Lee Rifle, Model of 1895 By the year of this rifle's designation, the turnbolt Mauser hadn't yet won the bolt-action war. In fact, although virtually all other developed nations in the world had adopted repeating rifles with smallbore smokeless cartridges, the United States was still issuing trapdoor Springfields in .45-70. The U.S. Navy jumped the gun (so to speak), adopting James Paris Lee's straight-pull bolt-action rifle in the 6mm Lee Navy for use by both the Navy and the Marines. The semi-rimmed cartridge (which was the parent case for the .220 Swift) was both the smallest-caliber and highest-velocity cartridge (112-grain bullet at 2,560 feet-per-second) to be adopted by a military force. In 1899, we adopted the .30 U.S. (.30-40 Krag) in the Krag-Jorgensen rifle, so the Lee rifle and its 6mm cartridge were short-lived (as the Krag was to be, replaced by the Springfield just four years later). However, it should not be implied that the straight-pull Lee was taken out of service overnight. It saw action in both Cuba and the Philippines in the Spanish-American War, and, despite legend, Marines in China carried it during the Boxer Rebellion (1900). It was a straight-pull Lee in 6mm Lee Navy that Marine Dan Daly wielded on top of the old Tartar Wall in Peking, holding his position alone and earning the first of two Medals of Honor. They were straight-pull Lee rifles carried by the relief column under Smedley Butler (the only other Marine to win two Medals of Honor) as they came to the aid of Daly and his besieged comrades in the Legation Quarter. Thanks to modern straight-pulls such as the Blaser, we now know that the straight-pull design is fast and reliable. I've never fired a Lee Model of 1895, so that remains on my bucket list.

Martini-Henry As we modified our Civil War Springfields into breechloaders, so did the Brits with their Snider-Enfields. In 1871, however, they took a quantum leap forward with the Martini-Henry, a falling-block single-shot designed for self-contained metallic



cartridges. Its .577/.450 cartridge, based on the .577 Snider case necked down to .458, used 85 grains of black-powder behind a 485-grain bullet. It was thus considerably more powerful than our .45-70. It's a simple rifle, with a cocking indicator but no safety, this coming from a time when volley fire by command was still the norm. It was the Mark II variant that was used in the Zulu War in 1879. Sights were

graduated to 1,800 yards, which probably wasn't particularly useful, but the 25-inch spike bayonet gave the lads considerable reach over their assegai-wielding Zulu adversaries. Production of the final Mark IV version ended in 1889, but the Martini-Henry continued in use throughout the Empire at least until World War I and is still occasionally seen today. Because it weighs just 8½ pounds, its recoil is significant, but as you shoot it, imagine that a trained infantryman could fire 12 rounds per minute — and imagine further the punishment he took as the barrel became fouled.

Thompson Submachine Gun Street-sweeper, Chicago piano, Tommy gun or whatever name you may know it by, the Thompson submachine gun was developed by General John Thompson just a bit too late to enter World War I.



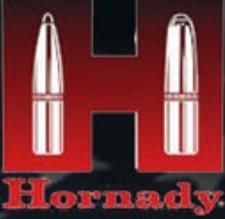
THOMPSON 1927A-1 (REPRODUCTION), .45 ACP \$1,715

However, it hit the streets in 1921. Various federal agencies as well as quite a few notorious individuals used them in small numbers throughout the 1920s, and the Marines used them during the "Banana Wars" of the '20s and '30s. The U.S. military didn't officially adopt the Thompson until 1938, but more than 1.5 million were made during World War II, and it remained in at least limited official service until 1971. Although its .45 ACP cartridge is very much a short-range affair, the Thompson was and is extremely reliable and, up close, devastating. When you heft it, you will be shocked at how heavy it is: nearly 11 pounds empty. The legend is that it's hard to control, but it really isn't. As Ernest Hemingway's character Harry Morgan ("To Have and Have Not," 1937) said to himself as he prepared to do mayhem, "You got to be light-fingered." Try it; you'll like it.

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MAUSER C96, 7.63mm \$3,000



WINCHESTER MODEL 1873, .357/.38 \$1,580

Mauser C96 Never heard of it? How about the "Broomhandle" Mauser? With its stripper-clip-loaded magazine ahead of the triggerguard, it is one of the most distinctive of all handguns, and for some reason it must have a somehow sinister profile because today it is most frequently seen in the hands of movie bad guys. More than 1 million were manufactured between 1896 and 1937, with copies made in Spain, China and elsewhere. The majority were purchased individually or in quantity as "secondary issue" pistols; China is the only nation that used the Mauser as standard issue. Even so, it was popular and extremely effective. Although later 9mm variants are common, the original bottleneck 7.63x23mm cartridge with a velocity of 1,394 fps reigned as the world's fastest handgun cartridge until the .357 Magnum came along. Although probably not long on stopping pow-

er, the C96 offered significant range, with the tangent sight graduated to an optimistic 1,000 yards. Just over a foot long, it's a big pistol that feels just plain weird, but it works like the incredible machine that it is.

Winchester Model 1873 Like many left-handers, I have a soft spot for the ambidextrous lever action, and of course the 1873 was "The Gun That Won the West" (at least in legend). With its long receiver and drop in the stock, I don't find it nearly as attractive as Winchester's later lever actions designed by John Browning: the 1886, 1892 and 1894. In fact, I hadn't shot a '73 until it was recently brought back into production; then I "got it." Designed for short pistol cartridges, the '73 may be the slickest of all lever actions. It requires just the tiniest flick of the lever to lower the breechblock, eject the spent case and carry a new one into the chamber. I never understood why the 1873 remained in production long after Winchester had several "better" lever actions in its line. Shoot a '73, and you'll understand, just like I did. **GA**



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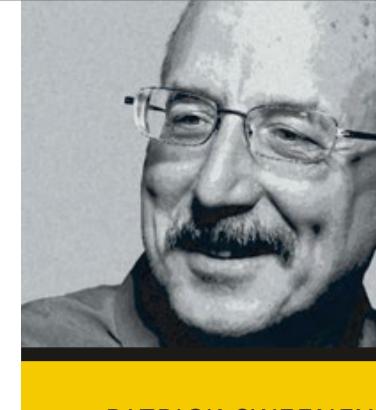
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PATRICK SWEENEY

STRIKE. RESTRIKE. LUCKY STRIKE.

WAGNER'S OPERA "SIEGFRIED" opens with the Mime forging a sword, which Siegfried, in testing, shatters. What use is a sword that will break? In the 21st century, what use is a cartridge that won't fire? I've seen it happen with factory ammunition a few times, and while extremely rare, it is upsetting. After all, that could have been the one cartridge I needed for defense of my life.

The current preference for the buying public, as far as pistols are concerned, is focused on striker-fired designs. Some pistols have restrike capability, and some don't. Not to get all philosophical, but does it matter?

Back in the medium-good days, there was no such question. When faced with a dud primer, those who carried revolvers simply released the trigger and stroked through again. It was, after all, what they were going to do anyway in their follow-up shots, so no problem. Those who carried pistols (with rare exceptions 1911s or Browning Hi-Powers) would do their tap-rack-bang, slapping the magazine to make sure it was seated, working the slide, then getting back to the business at hand.

When Smith & Wesson came along with the M-39 and later the M-59, the process was also simple: Treat the pistol like a revolver, and press the trigger again.

Then came the strikers. Glocks, the first striker-fired pistols, did not and still do not have a restrike capability. While they worked like magazine-fed revolvers when they worked, when they didn't, you had to treat them like single-action pistols and rack them. The traditional double-action-pistol makers fought back valiantly. They improved, redesigned, polished and upgraded their designs and

even came up with new geometries for double-action-only (DAO) trigger systems for pistols. It was all for naught.

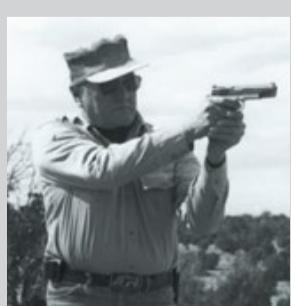
We now have a slew of competing striker and striker-like designs, and some have restrike capability, and some don't. Which should you choose, and why?

The arguments for restrike come down to essentially two. It is faster and easier to rework the trigger than it is to do anything else. Plus, you can restrike one-handed, whereas working the slide with just one hand is not easy.

The argument for not having restrike is that continued futzing around with an obviously recalcitrant cartridge is a low-percentage decision. That attitude is summed up thusly: If it won't work, get that round out of there, and find a happier candidate for saving your hide. There is also a secondary assertion that the designs that allow restrike are a bit more complex (complexity being a bad thing, generally speaking), and their designs do not have trigger pulls that are as good. I don't want to sound elitist here, but coming to this from the viewpoint of a long-time 1911 and DA-revolver user, the strikers all have marginal trigger pulls compared with a proper 1911 trigger, and none of them are as heavy as a stock DA trigger from the old days. The trigger-pull argument doesn't carry much weight with me.



A number of models are marketed for their restrike capability, including the Taurus 800 series (right) and SIG Sauer's P290RS (left).



COOPER ON HANDGUNS

"If you feel that great power is your prime need, and that you don't mind the weight and bulk it entails, there is only one gun for you, the Smith & Wesson .44 Magnum." — Jeff Cooper, 1958

Despite being a long-time shooter, I look at it from a different perspective, and that would be of the engineer. Why do cartridges fail to go off when we want them to?

I've seen, I think, all the iterations: dead or dud primers, primers that are hard but willing only after extra effort, primer pock-ets that lack a flash hole, primers that lack priming, cartridges that lack powder (which often leads to other, more serious than not-firing problems), the wrong round chambered and, everyone's favorite, no round in the chamber.

Of all those, the only one in which a restrike capability would help is the hard but reluctantly willing primer. Dud or dead primers? No amount of hammering will ignite the powder. A flash hole that is nonexistent? Ditto; even a primer packed with C4 is not going to set off the powder. No powder? OK, so you've already popped the bullet out of



RUGER SR1911, HAMMER FIRED,
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KAHR CT45, STRIKER FIRED,
NO RESTRIKE CAPABILITY \$449

WILSON COMBAT/BERETTA 92G,
HAMMER FIRED, RESTRIKE CAPABLE \$1,195

the case; what is a restrike going to do for you? Of course, in that case, tap-rack-bang has an alternate ending: Boom.

The wrong round? Have you ever chambered a 9mm in a .40 pistol or a 10mm or a .40 in a .45? It may go bang, but the split case can't cycle the action, and you're left with working the slide. There's no joy from a restrike there.

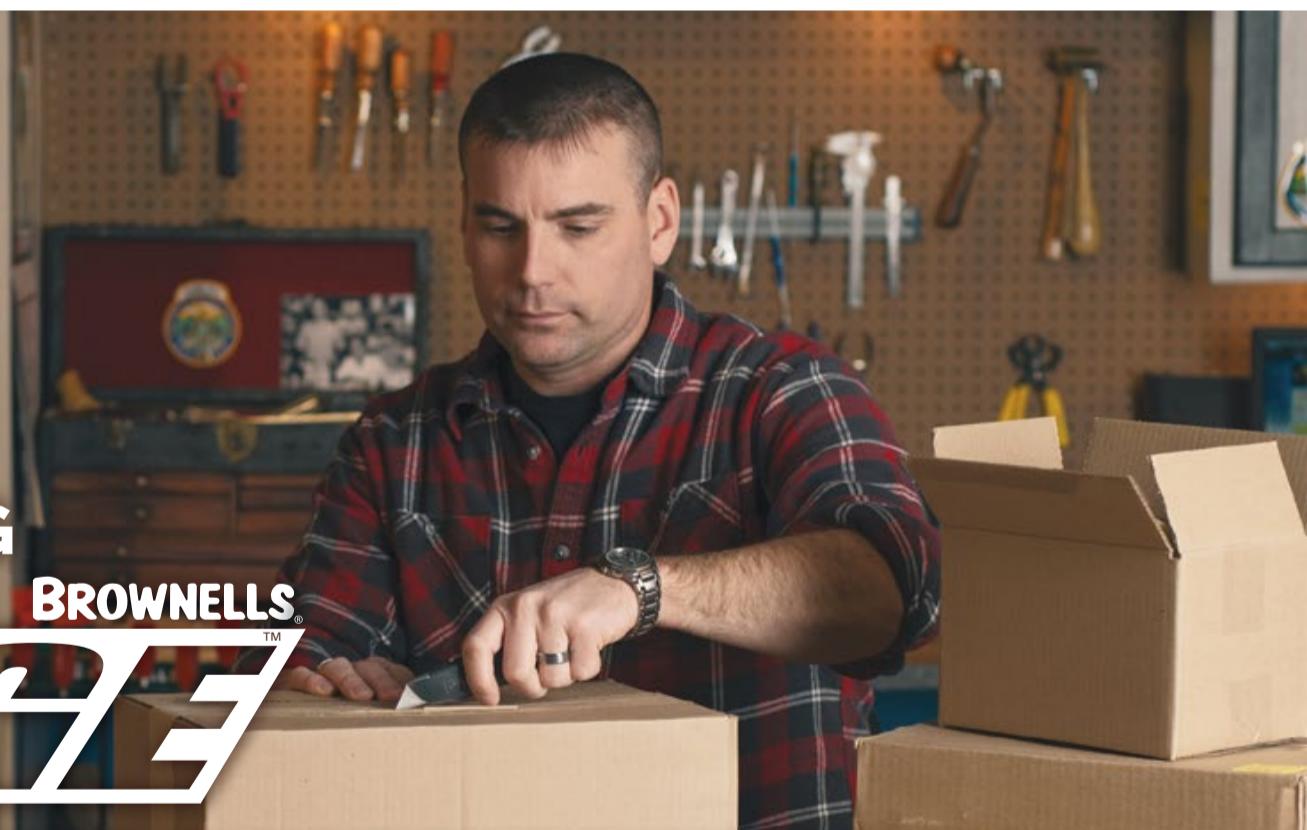
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ber? That can only be solved by working the slide.

Clearly, we are dependent on the ammo in this process. If you are always and only using American-made ammo, I'd say the chances of a dud or dead primer are pretty low. Your problem is one of the others listed, and you should be working the slide. Overseas, that may not be the case. I have used surplus ammo that was wondrously crappy and too often required two or three hammer falls before it ignited.

If you are on a PSD in some Third World armpit, you may find that the percentage of dodgy primers in the local-sourced ammo warrants a restrike capability just

because you can't afford to be ditching ammo.

The answer for me is pretty simple: I am too set in my ways, too thoroughly conditioned in the slide option as the only option, to pay any attention to restrike. If it is there, fine. If it isn't, OK. Either way, if I hear the enormously loud click that should have been a gunshot, I'm working the slide. I've been doing it that way for a half-century, and when we get phased plasma rifles in the 40-watt range, I'll still be trying to work the slide.

Does that mean I won't buy a pistol with restrike? Not at all. If it fits my hand, if it works reliably, if it has a good trigger, I'm all for it. I just won't be paying attention to the restrike.

Does that mean the rest of you get to give the choice a pass? Oh, you should be so lucky. No, those of you who are in the current learning cohort, the next generation of shooters and gunwriters, you get to decide on the new gear for yourselves. Hey, I can't do it all for you.

That decision should follow the same rational process that anything so important would. What are the benefits? What are the costs? How much effort does it take to train a proper routine? Once trained, how often does that training need to be refreshed?

As a first attempt at designing a methodology, I'd say it would be something like this: On the sound of the click, work the trigger once again, with the full intention of racking the slide if it fails. Second click, get to working the slide. This does add a bit of time to the process, but it also covers all the bases. If that doesn't satisfy you, well, get to work, and develop your own method. The first one to come up with one that works gets to name it after himself.

"Siegfried"? That opera is the third of the four in the "Nibelungen," the complete set taking four evenings, of four hours each, to sit through. The opening act of the third opera revolves around the failure of Mime to make a suitable sword, since Siegfried has broken every sword ever forged for him. I won't comment on what it takes to sit through 16 hours of Wagner, but if you find you are consistently experiencing failed primers, you have a bigger problem than deciding between strike and restrike. Solve that problem first, then decide. Spoiler alert: Siegfried dies. **G&A**

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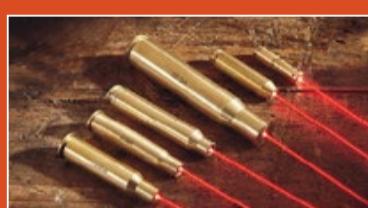
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CROSSBREED APPENDIX CARRY

SEVERAL YEARS AGO, CrossBreed Holsters popularized the hybrid holster market by combining a Kydex shell with a leather backer. Its pragmatic approach, which favors substance over style, was the impetus for the company's tagline, "The ugliest holster you'll ever love." Granted, aficionados of fine leather may scoff at the simple design of a CrossBreed holster, but in my book, combining the concealment and comfort of leather with the ease of draw and positive holstering attributes of Kydex is a beautiful thing.

CrossBreed's Appendix Carry is an inside-the-waistband (IWB) holster intended to be worn in either the 12:30 to 2 o'clock position (appendix carry) for righties or the 10 o'clock to 11:30 position for lefties, which would be a crossdraw configuration for a right-handed shooter. Available in black cowhide, tan premium hard-rolled cowhide and natural tan horsehide (when available), the Appendix

Carry holster comes with a black metal spring clip that secures the holster to your belt. The clip allows the holster to be adjusted for ride height and cant.

30-Day Carry The Appendix Carry holster is available to fit a large variety of handgun models. I evaluated one designed for my Smith & Wesson J-Frame Airweight revolver. I have carried snubnose revolvers off and on for years in all sorts of holsters, so I was eager to see how CrossBreed's Appendix Carry would measure up.

A good concealed carry holster needs to do more than hide your gun. It must be comfortable enough to wear for hours at a time, whether you're standing, seated or moving, and it must facilitate a rapid drawstroke. The Appendix Carry holster's leather backer prevents the frame of the gun from contacting your skin. Not only does this

make wearing it more comfortable, it keeps potentially damaging moisture away from your gun. Of course, knowing that you have unimpeded access to your gun's grip is also comforting, which is why the Appendix Carry's leather backer is strategically cut so that the grip remains exposed.

This holster can be concealed easily with a loose-fitting, untucked T-shirt, which is my preferred carry method. I found that it took about seven seconds to don the holster in this manner. However, like CrossBreed's hugely successful SuperTuck and MiniTuck holster lines, the Appendix Carry holster can be easily concealed even with a shirt that's tucked into your pants. Strapping up in this manner takes a few extra seconds, and, of course, drawing from a tucked shirt is more challenging. This mode of carry is a viable option when a more professional appearance is in order. Pair a dress shirt with a black belt, and the metal clip is pretty inconspicuous.

Many leather holsters emit a telltale creak with every step you take. Not so with the Appendix Carry holster.



Every holster deserves a quality belt. The CrossBreed Gun Belt is specifically designed to support the weight of a gun in the holster. Made from top-grade cowhide, this belt is sturdy, yet pliable. **\$59.50**

However, I did notice that toward the end of the test, as the leather backer yielded to the shape of the gun, the fit loosened, causing the gun to rattle slightly.

By the end of the 30-day eval period, when inverted, the holster would no longer retain my revolver. This isn't a matter of craftsmanship but rather a natural characteristic of leather. A Kydex backer would provide a snugger fit but might not be as comfortable.

I found the Appendix Carry holster to be very comfortable. As it broke in, especially from sitting with it on, the top and bottom of the leather backer began to curl inward to conform to my body. This is potentially problematic, as the top curling could block your thumb as you attempt to acquire a shooting grip. However, with appendix carry, especially with a snubnose revolver, rather than

thrust the web of my hand down on the grip, I focus on the contact between my middle finger and the area where the grip and the bottom of the triggerguard meet, then wrap my fingers around the grip. From there, I can easily lift the

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DISTINCT ADVANTAGE™

CrossBreed	Appendix Carry (Right)
Materials	Natural tan horsehide leather (backer), molded Kydex (pocket)
Carry Type	AIWB
Retention Type	Level 1, friction
Adjustability	Cant, ride height
MSRP	From \$62.50 (\$72.50 as tested)
Handgun Fit	Smith & Wesson J-frame Airweight (tested)
Accessory Rail Accommodations	None
Positions to Carry	Appendix, crossdraw
Average Time to Attach	7 seconds
Comfort Rating	4/5
Concealment Clothing	Loose-fitting T-shirt, light button-up shirt
Average Draw-to-Fire Time	2.1 seconds
Manufacturer	CrossBreed Holsters, 888-732-5011, crossbreedholsters.com

Draw-to-fire time is the average of five clean draws from under a concealed garment, presented to a stationary target positioned at 21 feet.



gun from the holster.

The Appendix Carry holster is conducive to fast draws. However, you need to make sure that the clip remains tight. If it loosens, the cant of the holster can be altered, resulting in the grip slipping deeper into your pants, which would impede your drawstroke.

The Appendix Carry holster is an excellent choice for concealing a small or medium-size handgun along the front of your waist. It is comfortable and concealable, and it affords

easy access to your gun. With a retail of \$72.50 (\$62.50 for the base model with black cowhide), the Appendix Carry holster is a midpriced option. As with all CrossBreed holsters, the Appendix Carry comes with a generous "two week, try it free" guarantee as well as a lifetime warranty. **GA**

— Richard Nance

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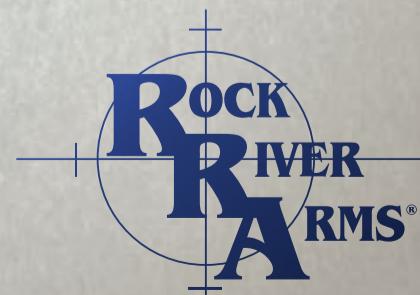
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Remington Model 700 Long Range Meopta 4-16x44 MeoStar R1



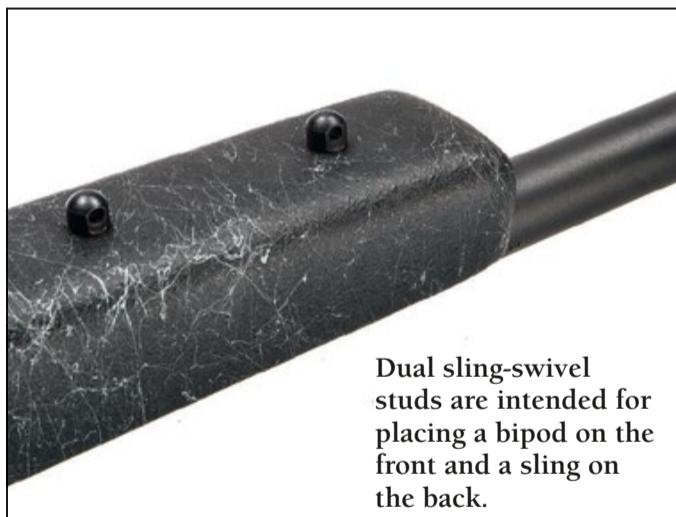
TOM BECKSTRAND

MY FAVORITE 700

REMINGTON unveiled the Model 700 in 1962 (although the bulk of the design work was done in the '40s with the 721 and 722 series rifles), and it has been making them ever since. The 700 is popular for a lot of reasons, chief among them being the performance offered for the price. There have been a lot of Model 700 variants over the years, but the one in current production that is my clear favorite is the model 700 Long Range chambered in .30-'06.

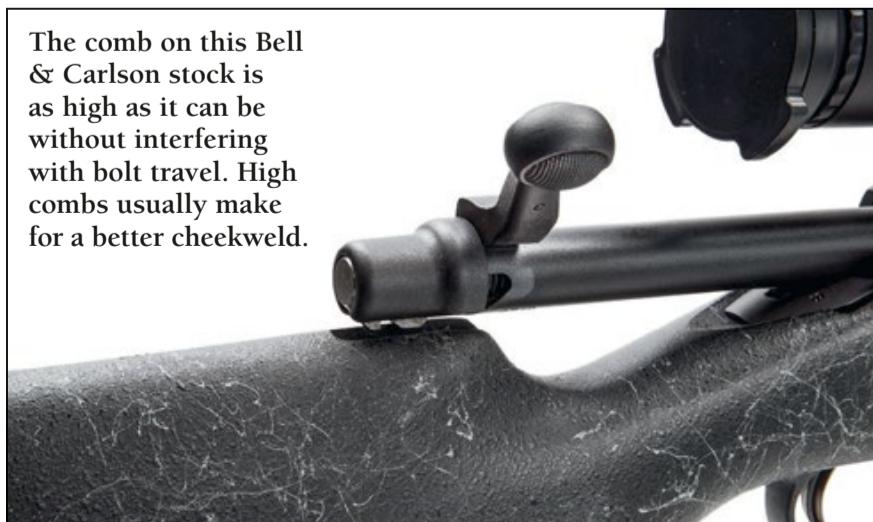
I'm not a huge fan of injection-molded polymer stocks. They're absolutely necessary to bring the price of a solid bolt-action rifle down to the \$400 mark, but they have a hard time ensuring that the barrel remains free floating, they allow more action movement under recoil, and they don't really accommodate aftermarket bottom metal and today's standardized detachable box magazines.

The Long Range model comes only in a long action and has a Bell & Carlson M40



Dual sling-swivel studs are intended for placing a bipod on the front and a sling on the back.

The comb on this Bell & Carlson stock is as high as it can be without interfering with bolt travel. High combs usually make for a better cheekweld.



tactical stock, although it's not really tactical; it's just a beefy hunting stock with a slightly square forend that rides bags and other supports well. The comb is as high as Remington can make it without interfering with bolt travel, so we have our best chance of getting a consistent cheekweld with this model without adding the weight and expense of an adjustable cheekpiece.

This subtle detail is an important one for helping us get maximum accuracy out of our rifle. Without consistent head placement on the stock, our accuracy degrades. If we need a little more comb height, there are a number of different stock packs that can be accommodated with negligible expense.

In addition to the well-apportioned size of the stock, it also has an aluminum bedding block that provides a very stable foundation for the action. The bedding block runs from underneath the chamber to the back tang and is surrounded by fiberglass. It puts a solid chunk of aluminum between the action and the triggerguard. This makes it very difficult for the action to move under recoil and, once torqued into place, minimizes point-of-impact shifts that can result when a rifle is roughly handled.

The 26-inch barrel on the Long Range model is Remington's varmint contour that handles heat much better than lighter, traditional hunting-barrel contours. Should we ever want to

Remington Model 700 Long Range

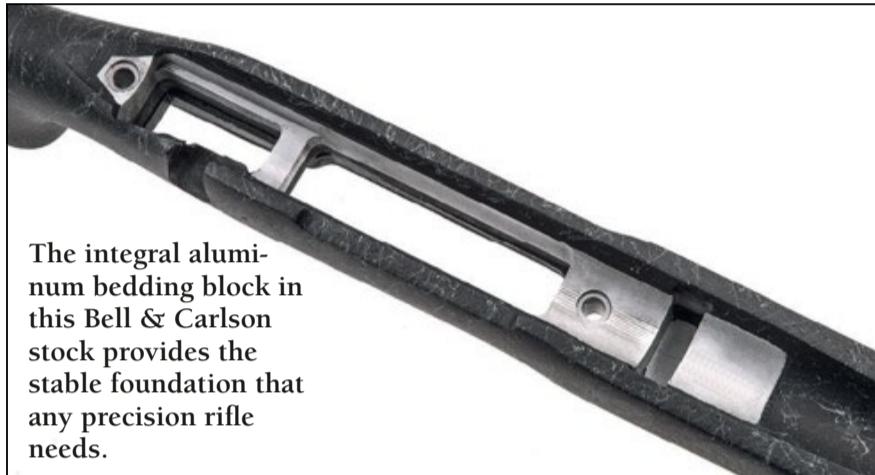
Type:	Bolt action
Caliber:	.30-'06
Capacity:	5 rds.
Barrel:	26 in.
Overall Length:	47 in.
Weight:	9 lbs.
Stock:	Bell & Carlson M40
Length of Pull:	14 in.
Finish:	Matte
Trigger:	X-Mark Pro
Sights:	None
Safety:	Remington style
MSRP:	\$829
Manufacturer:	Remington, 800-243-9700 remington.com

dabble in long-range shooting where we might need to fire more than three rounds every few minutes, this heavier barrel will be invaluable. The 26-inch length also makes good use of all the powder in the cartridge case, even if we get one chambered in the big magnums.

The best part about the Long Range model is that many of the big outdoor retailers carry them for less than \$700. That's for a long-action Model 700 with a premium fiberglass stock that won't need to be replaced even if we like to shoot our rifle for hours at a time. The heavy barrel

is also up to the task of prolonged range sessions ringing steel as far out as we can see it. When we look at what's being offered and what we're asked to pay, this model easily gives us the most bang for our buck.

It comes chambered in .25-'06, .30-'06 (one of my favorites), 7mm Remington Magnum, .300 Winchester Magnum and .300 Remington Ultra Magnum. Each rifle weighs 9 pounds, so they might not be the best choice if we plan on climbing up a mountain. That weight makes the rifle more pleasant to shoot, though.



The integral aluminum bedding block in this Bell & Carlson stock provides the stable foundation that any precision rifle needs.



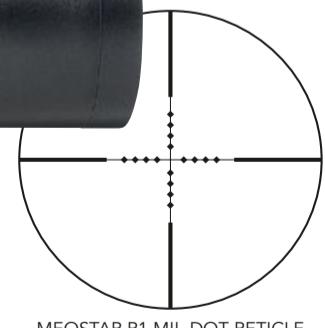
The 700 Long Range features Remington's X-Mark Pro trigger as standard equipment. It's factory set to a 3½-pound pull weight and affords 2 pounds of range adjustment.



The Model 700 Long Range does well off a bipod or a field-expedient rest. Though not ideal for some hunting, its weight does tame recoil.



The floorplate on this 700 swings out of the way, making unloading in the field or on the range a breeze.



BEST-KEPT SECRET

MEOPTA is the best-kept secret in the optics industry. Headquartered in the Czech Republic, the company began making military optics in 1935 and has been at it ever since. While the name isn't well known here in the United States, many of the optic products we see from the popular big-box outdoor stores and premium European

manufacturers are actually made by Meopta.

The first time I had any real experience with the Meopta name came when I was on a hunt with several other gunwriters, one of whom had carved himself a niche as an optics guru and had been writing for a few decades. Sitting around the dinner table on a hunt is always a good time to throw



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The 44mm objective lens is just the right size for its power range. Not too large, this scope is light and compact in the field.

out questions and conduct informal surveys, so I asked who made the best binoculars and noted the replies. The old hand asked in return, "One-thousand- or \$2,000 models?" As soon as I said, "One-," he answered, "Meopta."

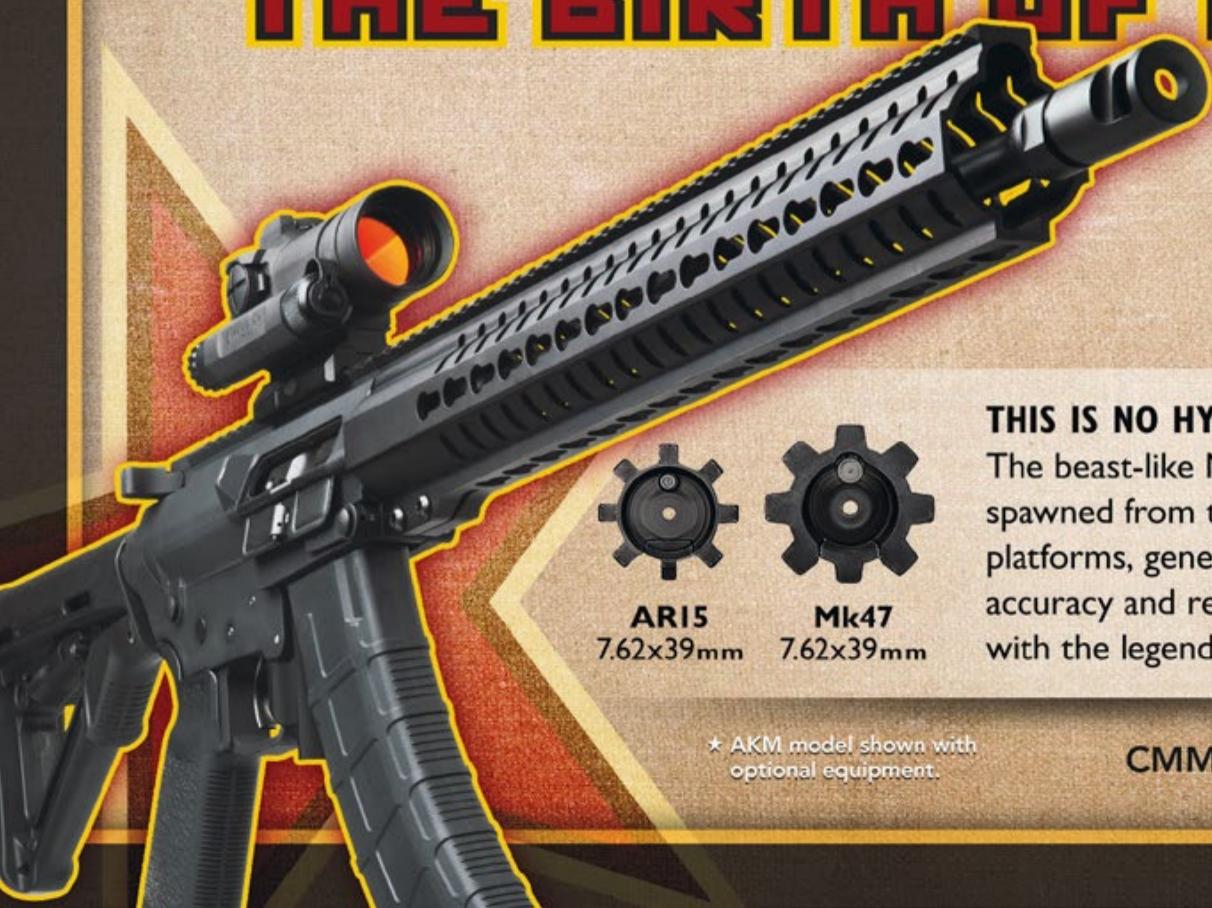
Here at Guns & Ammo, we've run a few optics comparisons, and Meopta consistently performs right alongside all the premium optic brands. In our informal spotting-scope study, the Meopta came in second (right behind a Swarovski spotter that cost nearly twice as much). It's not every day you find a company that can consistently fight up a couple of weight classes and win.

Part of Meopta's success lies in its long history in the Czech Republic, a country known for turning out quality firearms and accessories. Labor rates are lower there than in other European countries, so those savings seem to get passed on to the consumer. In fact, some of the big-name European manufacturers still find it economical to have their products built by Meopta and sold under their name. Here in the States, if you buy the big-box retailers' premium-branded optical products, those are also likely made by Meopta. Needless to say, Meopta's competitors think highly of its products.

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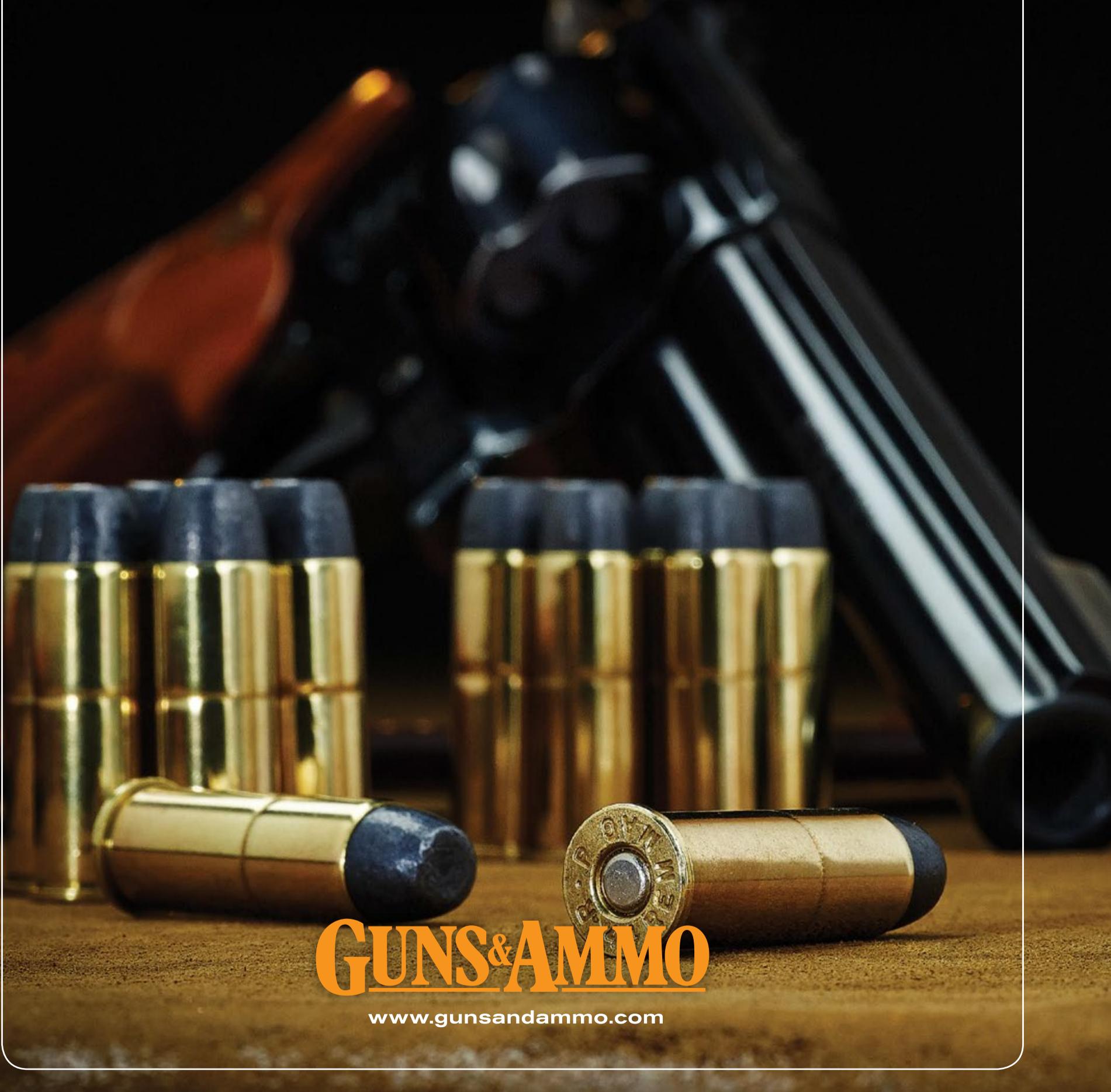
The beast-like Mk47 MUTANT is instead spawned from two of the world's greatest platforms, genetically re-engineered for AR15 accuracy and relentless AK47-like reliability with the legendary 7.62x39mm caliber.

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Meopta 4-16x44 MeoStar R1

Power: 4-16X
Objective: 44mm
Tube Diameter: 30mm
Elevation Adjustment: .25 MOA per click
Windage: .25 MOA per click
Reticle: Mil-Dot
Length: 15.16 in.
Weight: 24 oz.
Eye Relief: 3.5 in.
MSRP: \$1,100

Manufacturer: Meopta, 800-828-8928, meopta.com

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The 4-16x44mm MeoStar R1 that I recently evaluated has excellent light transmission and clarity. It has a 30mm maintube that gives the internal volume necessary for a good erector-tube assembly, but, unlike many 30mm maintube scopes that retail for around \$1,000, this one hides a full-size erector-tube assembly inside. Big maintubes and big lenses in erector assemblies are two critical components necessary for strong optical performance, and this Meopta checks both of those boxes.

This MeoStar also avoids a common pitfall associated with robust marketing departments: oversize objective lenses. The ideal objective lens size (in millimeters) for a 4-16X scope is somewhere in the high 30s to low 40s. A bigger objective would only degrade resolution while offering a next-to-meaningless size increase in exit pupil. With the quality glass, sizeable erector and maintube offered by the MeoStar, the 44mm objective lens is its complement. Thank you, Meopta, for not slapping a mongooso objective lens on this scope and claiming that "it gathers more light." Marketing departments have repeated this lie so often that it's almost accepted as truth.

The MeoStar R1's front focus adjustment and diamond-shaped Mil-Dot reticle give it a distinctive and functional European flavor. Windage and elevation adjust in quarter-MOA clicks, which means there's going to be some math to do if you want to mil and dial targets. Both turrets are capped, so there is no chance of inadvertently moving them off zero. If you've never tried a Meopta, perhaps now is a good time. **GA**



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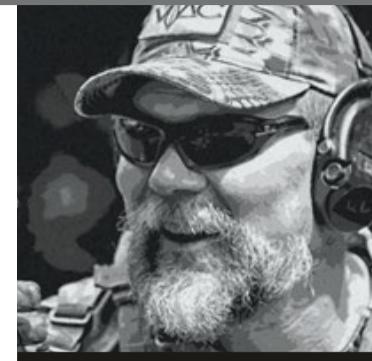


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SHOOTING GLOVES & SHOOTING WITH GLOVES

THE QUESTION OFTEN ARISES, should I wear shooting gloves? The argument seems to be that if you are a civilian or law enforcement officer who does not usually wear gloves during your daily escapades, why would you wear them to train? The fact of the matter is this: If you never shoot with gloves, and one day you pull your firearm to eliminate a threat when you just happen to have gloves on, you will be behind in the quest to reach the end of your OODA loop before your enemy does. If you have never trained with gloved mitts, you will most likely feel uncomfortable handling your firearm and lose some manual dexterity when trying to manipulate it while wearing them.

First of all, you must train with gloves. If you shoot every day with gloves and at the last minute of the last day I ask you to perform barehanded, you will be fine. You will shoot a little better without gloves even though you haven't been training this way. However, if you always train barehanded and now are evaluated after adding a pair of gloves, you will be a little slower.

The quest for a great shooting glove continues. You should try to find a large-enough pair of thick gloves to fit over your shooting gloves to make the transition from thick to shooting gloves relatively quickly.

Shooting gloves are expendable. Shooting gloves can be expensive, and they don't last forever. I typically wear out a pair in one or two months. Whenever I am on the range, I wear them (about 35 hours a week) to protect my hands during shooting, moving targets, stapling, clearing malfunctions and moving barricades.

Gloves are for protection. As a Special Operations shooting instructor, I was

surprised to see 18 students show up on the second day of gloved shooting instruction with gloves that had no fingers. These students had shot for a couple of weeks without gloves to refine technique and toughen their hands, and next they were to wear gloves. The day prior, their flight gloves looked like they should, with fingers. Day two, no fingers. I was pissed. It seems that one of the other instructors had made a statement that he cut all the fingers out of his gloves. What the students didn't understand was that JP had Kevlar skin and was strong as two oxen. After that day, all of the students went back to the Central Issue Facility (CIF) and turned in the wrecked gloves.

If your gloves are too thick for shooting, get different ones, but never compromise the integrity of the glove.

Types of Shooting Gloves When I talk about shooting gloves, I am referring to tactical types, not revolver or padded gloves that are used to protect your support hand during service rifle matches.

I break down tactical gloves into these categories:

Pistol Gloves These require less padding and thickness. Too much of either and you will have severe shooting difficulty, especially if you are shooting a pistol with small levers and buttons such as a 1911 or any pistol with a thumb safety. If your shooting gloves won't allow every movement required to shoot a pistol, dump them.

Carbine Gloves These allow me to operate my carbine. I have enough dexterity with these gloves to know what is what on the rifle



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WILEY X TAG-1 \$150



or carbine. Having more padding or tougher materials isn't an issue since the movements with the carbine are simply turning the safety on and off, squeezing the trigger, reloading and possibly adjusting a scope.

Warm Gloves These give you the warmth to stay operational, but they must also allow manipulation of the pistol. Their downfall is the bulkiness associated with insulation and the slipperiness that often comes with warmth-giving materials. There is also the issue of durability, as many are made for winter sports, not shooting.

Pistol Gloves Pistol gloves should allow for easy manipulation of not just the pistol's controls but any associated thumb breaks and devices. A light is a good example. Can you get to your handheld or pistol-mounted light? Can you turn it on and off? Since I shoot a carbine as much as if not more than my pistol, I need gloves that work with both systems. Changing gloves in the middle of a shooting string isn't an option. I have tried gloves that are beefed up in certain areas, and they just don't seem to cut it for pistol shooting. Thinner is better, but again, with a thinner glove comes less durability. If a glove has numerous seams, they tend to bind, come loose or get in the way. I prefer a slick glove.

You also have to decide if you prefer a Velcro closure or

an elastic cuff. The old-school aviator's flight glove is just a long glove with no elastic or Velcro. I prefer a glove with a Velcro closure in order to adjust the feel to the exact specification I want.

I have several sets of go-to pistol gloves. PIG gloves from SKD, \$36, are minimalist and allow for the finest feel I've found. The only feature they are lacking is the hard-knuckle detail. Hard Time gloves from 5.11 have a protected knuckle, and the leather is soft once they are broken in; they cost \$75. Another new glove is Kryptek's Gunfighter hard-knuckle version, at \$80. They are a little on the hot side but fit well and have a tacky feel, which is great when shooting a pistol. I use one of these three types of gloves constantly.

Carbine and Rifle Gloves If your primary firearm is a carbine or rifle, you may want a slightly different glove. Most gloves allow for the manipulation of an AR, but you could lose some trigger-finger sensitivity. Try the 5.11 Station Grip gloves. They cost around \$28 and work well. I haven't yet worn out a set. They are too thick to use when shooting a pistol ... that is, if you want to shoot fast and accurately. I am not sure what the final finish on these gloves is, but they seem indestructible. I would lump most so-called "tactical" gloves in the category of working with the carbine simply because you don't have to feel the gun as

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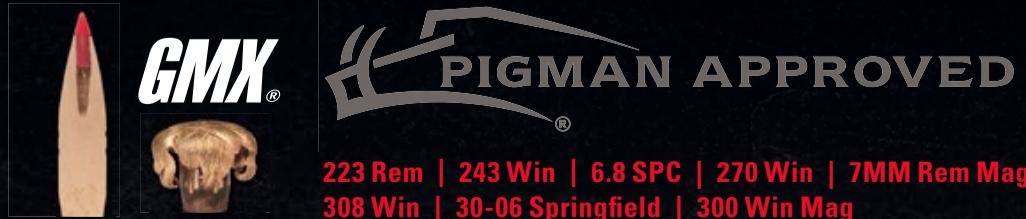
~ Brian “Pigman” Quaca

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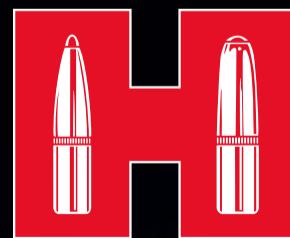


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well as you must with a pistol. If you are having a hard time deciding on a tactical glove, head to Lowe's and check out the Mechanix gloves, which are good but not very durable.

Warm Gloves The two gloves I have found that work extremely well for shooting and keeping the digits toasty all the way into the high teens are Smart Wool Stagecoach gloves, \$65, and Kryptek's Norlander gloves, \$80. The nice feature of both is that they are wool. The Stagecoach glove has wool as the primary ingredient and leather palms. The Norlander has wool as the base, and the

grippy leather palm and fingers do the trick. Both of these gloves are a little heavy for pistol shooting, but they work very well for any kind of rifle or carbine work. Wool is fantastic since it still maintains warmth when wet. This is where standard fleece gloves start to fail. As soon as they are wet, they lose their ability to protect you from the elements. The Norlanders cut the wind better than the Smart Wool Stagecoach.

Kryptek has introduced a soft-shell version of this glove called the Rogue, which retails for \$100. This is a healthy price, but the gloves work great. Also, if you are a hunter,

you may be able to get away with a simple leather glove that you can find at most feed stores.

Flame Retardant If you prefer performance materials, flame retardant isn't for you. If you want to have hands and fingers after a severe IED fire, I would definitely get a set of gloves that won't immediately melt to your skin. This may not be a prerequisite for your selection, but if you are operating in the Armed Forces, put this at the top of your list. Don't dismiss the good old flight glove. It's not the best, but it does afford a little protection.

Most units issue this to their operators. If you want Nomex, there are many choices, from Blackhawk's Fury, which will set you back around \$72, to Wiley X's TAG-1 with Nomex and Kevlar, which covers more area and costs \$150.

When it comes to cold-weather gloves and flame retardant, stick with wool. It works, and it deals with fire and flash well. Just make sure the gloves are entirely wool and leather. Polyester is used in many wool gloves on the market, and it does not survive fiery situations at all.

Manufacturers seem to change designs frequently, so if you find gloves you really like, buy several pairs. **QA**

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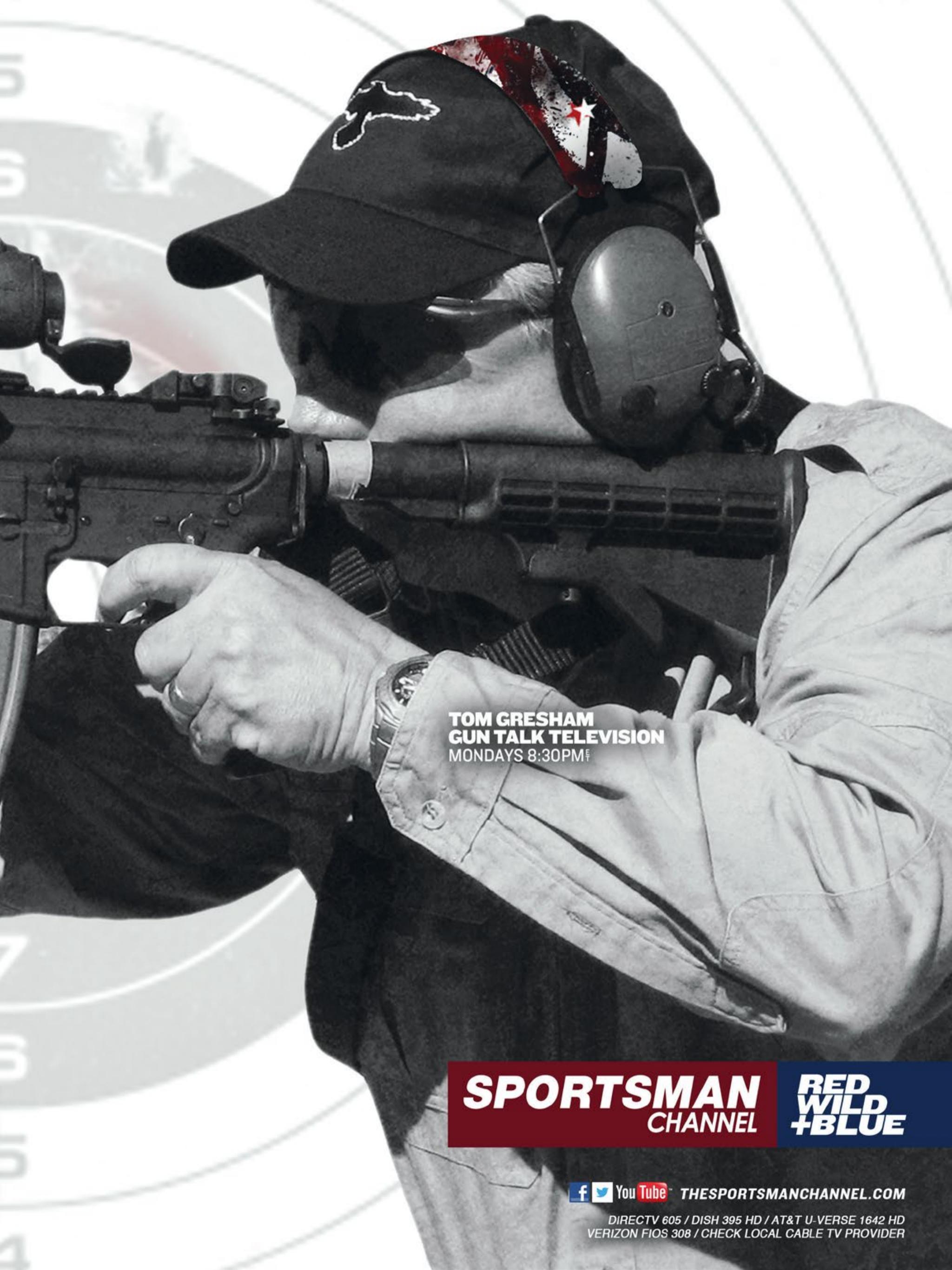
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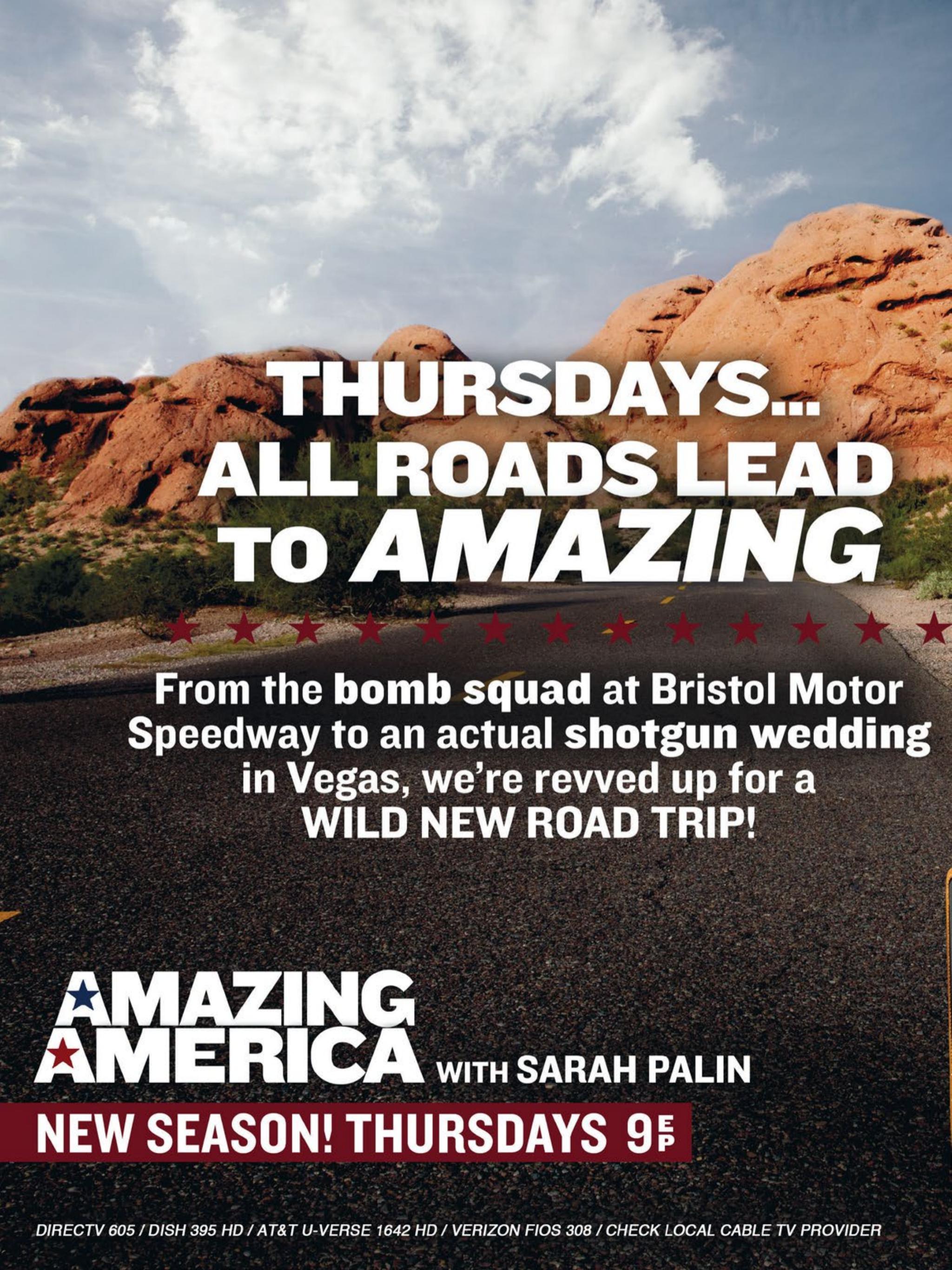
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IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T HEARD, the military is looking for a new pistol. The program is called the Modular Handgun System (MHS), and it articulates the military's desire to field a pistol and ammunition combination that offers more "accuracy, reliability and terminal performance."

The idea briefs well but promises to turn into one more "good idea" that will probably end with a canceled program, lots of hurt feelings and no improvements for our troops' guns and gear. The media says the wars are over, and defense budgets are drying up. The argument that

M9A3

Someone needs to teach Uncle Sam how to recognize a good deal.

WORDS BY TOM BECKSTRAND | PHOTOS BY SEAN UTLEY

our current pistol could use some upgrades is valid, but saying we need a replacement is laughable if you can see the big picture. Funding the search for and fielding a replacement would be a colossal waste of tax dollars, especially when we consider Beretta's more affordable offer to upgrade existing M9s to M9A2s or to enlist the

new M9A3. Not to be confused with the specifications of the MHS solicitation, the M9A3 could fill the gap in time necessary to bring into service, train with and inventory parts for whatever pistol the MHS contract might adopt. In fact, choosing the M9A3 could



be as simple as upgrading the 80,000 pistols left to be built and delivered by Beretta USA for the current M9 contract.

Militaries and Pistols I once had the good fortune of attending a Special Forces Close Quarters Battle (CQB) training program, which lasted eight weeks. The standards to pass the program were very high, and many of my Green Beret brethren didn't pass because they failed to meet the required shooting standards. The program was pistol-heavy because, as one instructor put it, "This is the only place in the entire military where you will really be taught how to shoot a pistol."

The military doesn't take pistol training very seriously because pistols are rarely used on the battlefield. This doesn't mean pistols are unnecessary, just that the majority of the troops carrying them are not proficient in their use. Our military would be well

advised to keep that fact in mind as it looks at possible contenders to replace the M9, a pistol around which we have already focused our limited resources.

The opportunity here is to improve what is already being provided to the government. Looking back, the Army didn't have a problem carrying out a dual-path strategy with the M4 and other systems. Every year, the U.S. Army holds an industry conference called "Quads" for manufacturers and solicits solutions to capability gaps with product-improvement suggestions, which usually come from design improvements or technology that didn't previously exist. For the past two years, Beretta has submitted M9 improvement proposals. Though the Army has always wanted to improve its small arms rather than replace them (e.g., M2 .50-caliber machine gun, M4 carbine, M240 machine gun, etc.), Uncle Sam has remained uninterested in improving the only item

in its armories that has never been upgraded.

M9 Engineering Change

Proposal (ECP) Beretta USA started with commercial parts bins and found that it could give the military an 80 percent or more solution to its list of MHS requirements for a lot less expense. One of the design features that make the M9 and the newer M9A3 ideal for military use is the trigger system. With the pistol's safety lever disengaged, Beretta has a double-action/single-action

trigger that provides a long, heavy pull for the first shot (if you don't manually cock the hammer) and then a short, crisp pull for subsequent shots. The first round's long, heavy pull is the most effective way to deter accidental discharges with young shooters. The best way to keep a pistol combat ready (for the majority of combat troops carrying it) is to keep a round in the chamber, safety off, with the hammer down. This is actually as safe as any loaded revolver. In this manner, there are no safety levers to move out of the way when it's go time, and the double-action trigger pull minimizes accidental discharges. In contrast, a striker-fired pistol with no external safety is fast into action but requires focused vigilance with trigger-finger discipline to avoid an unintentional incident.

The trigger-pull weight is easy to change on the M9 family by swapping out mainsprings. The military uses a very heavy mainspring to ensure detonation of the hard primers used with military ammunition. Removing the mainspring entails taking out the retaining pin that secures the lanyard loop to the pistol's frame, letting the spring drop out and putting a lighter one in its place. I've never had a problem with the lighter "D" spring setting off the harder primers, and the trigger pull is much more user friendly. Beretta has also improved its trigger spring so that when it is fully compressed, it isn't binding on the pin.



The M9A3 fieldstrips down to the major components we're all used to seeing. The noncaptured recoil spring makes this item interchangeable with other M9s already in the military's inventory.

Beretta M9A3

Type: Short-recoil operated, double action/single action, semiautomatic

Caliber: 9mm

Capacity: 17+1 rds.

Barrel: 5.1 in.

Overall Length: 8.7 in.

Weight: 2 lbs., 1 oz.

Finish: FDE Cerakote (steel), FDE anodized (aluminum)

Grips: Vertec panels or rubber overmold w/arched backstrap

Sights: Three dot, tritium, drift adjustable, dovetailed

Trigger: 5.5 lbs. (SA), 11 lbs. (DA)

Price: TBD

Manufacturer: Beretta USA
800-237-3882
beretta.com

Suppressing a pistol is one of the MHS requirements, and it makes sense for any pistol, military or civilian. Shooting a pistol in an enclosed space is incredibly loud and can detract from our efforts to put rounds on target. At night, the muzzle blast and flash will also cause our pupils to constrict, greatly diminishing our ability to see in low-light scenarios.

Perhaps no pistol is more suppressor friendly than Beretta's new M9A3. We can stick a threaded barrel (which the A3 has) on any pistol, and it still won't match the Beretta for reliable use. The barrel's centerline axis on the M9 family of pistols never moves when the pistol cycles. Just about every other pistol has the chamber end of the barrel drop toward the magazine well to

move out of the way and let the slide cycle. This makes the muzzle end rotate up at the same time the chamber end rotates down.

When we hang a suppressor on a barrel that needs to rotate, the weight will cause the pistol to malfunction unless we use a timed, spring-loaded booster that momentarily allows the suppressor to float on the muzzle as the slide cycles. As long as we spend the time to figure out what load the pistol/suppressor combination likes, we can get reliable operation with this setup.

Guns & Ammo recently visited Beretta USA's manufacturing facility in Accokeek, Maryland, for an exclusive testfire of two different variations of the M9A3 (one with a full-size wrap-



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(March/April 2015 issue)



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around grip, another with the standard grip panels on the thin Vertec frame). We found that attaching a suppressor to the M9A3 had zero horizontal impact shift out to 50 meters. (A downward vertical shift measuring 2 inches was noted.)

The M9A3 will eat any ammo we want to stuff in it, suppressed or not. We can just screw the suppressor directly to the threaded barrel; no booster is necessary, because the barrel remains oriented along the bore's centerline axis during the entire firing cycle. Simple is always better and more reliable, and no suppression system is more simple than the A3's.

Needed Updates The M9A3 has nearly all the updates needed to help our service pistol meet its operational requirements both on and off today's battlefield. The most obvious changes when compared with the M9 are the addition of a Picatinny rail on the dustcover and the slimmer Vertec grip.

The Picatinny rail is essential because it allows the shooter to mount a pistol light. The Marines' newer M9A1 features a rail with a single lug. The M9A3 has three for accommodating a broader variety of pistol lights. History reports that many pistol engagements occur at night or in dimly lit spaces, so having a light on board makes a lot of sense. Light also makes target identification possible and makes us much more accurate by letting us see what we're about to shoot. Any duty pistol needs to have an attached and dedicated light.

The adoption of Beretta's Vertec frame would make the M9A3

a much better fit for shooters with small hands or even those who favor slender grip panels and straight backstraps (think back to the M1911). The reduction in grip circumference is substantial and, to my hand, preferred over the original M9 series. The M9A3 is offered with a wraparound rubber grip that replicates the M9 and M9A1 grip profile for those who favor the thicker grip with arched backstrap.

Like the M9A1, the M9A3 has checkering on the front- and backstrap. This change came to the M9 family when the Marines adopted the M9A1 back in 2006. The M9A1 had the Picatinny rail on the dustcover; a Beretta-designed, sand-resistant magazine; and checkering on the front- and backstraps. The M9A3's frame has the same Pic rail and checkering but also includes the reduced and recontoured grip to fit the needs of smaller-than-large hands.

The dovetail front sight is a welcome change over the originally mandated integral model on the M9. The dovetail allows the end user to put whichever sight he prefers up front.

The manual safety is mounted higher up on the slide to help prevent inadvertent activation. The slide also has a dovetail rear sight.



In addition to the above frame work, the M9A3 has an oversize magazine release from the commercial 92 Combat pistol, which makes it possible to drop the magazine without repositioning our hand on the pistol. When this is coupled with the smaller grip, it is now much easier for smaller hands to effectively operate the M9A3 than its predecessor.

The slide has also seen significant work when compared with earlier M9 models. The redesigned A3 slide can be converted back and forth between a "G" decocker-only model and an "F" safety-selector model by an armorer.

Though most of us are certain that Uncle Sam would never go for anything but a pistol with a manually engaged safety, the decocker makes the most sense, as it renders the pistol as safe as any handgun, yet keeps the lever under spring tension so that it will always move out of the way once it's released.

For those troops wanting a traditional safety, the M9A3 can meet that configuration, too. Beretta has redesigned the safety by moving it higher up on the slide with an over-center axis that's slightly canted upward 10 degrees. This greatly reduces the possibility of accidentally engaging the safety when clearing a malfunction with a hand-over-slide technique.

Some instructors teach grabbing the slide in an overhand hold and raking the slide length to clear stovepipes and simultaneously charge the pistol. If done carelessly, this method can engage the safety on the M9. If this is how the owner wants to clear stovepipes, I'd recommend setting up the pistol as a decocker model.

PERHAPS NO PISTOL IS MORE SUPPRESSOR FRIENDLY THAN BERETTA'S NEW M9A3.



Problem solved; problem staying solved.

The other big news up top is the use of dovetailed sights front and rear. There are tritium inserts in both sights, so we're all set for low-light engagements. Thanks to the use of dovetails, the M9A3 can also accommodate suppressor-height sights. These sights stick up significantly more from the slide and are designed to see over the top of an attached suppressor. Of course, civilian shooters will also appreciate the dovetails because they allow them to use whatever aftermarket sights they prefer. Previously, the front sight blade was integral to the slide.

Magazine Woes Beretta makes beautiful magazines, and they slide right into a steeper-beveled magazine well on the A3, much

The optional wrap-around grip gives the slimmer Vertec frame the same contour as the original M9 for those with large hands.

like on the Marine Corps' A1. The magazines that ship with the commercial 92 series are great, and the military has always had access to the same. However, in the late-1990s, the military elected to accept bids from third-party vendors to see who could provide a better, cheaper magazine. Decision makers also wanted

these new magazines to have their preferred phosphate coating.

Phosphate coating works on barrels, receivers and lots of other gun parts, but it's a horrible choice for magazines. The coating is rough and doesn't allow a magazine follower to slide up and down like it needs to. Checkmate won the contract to produce the magazines and begged not to use the military-specified finish because it knew it would cause feeding malfunctions. Checkmate was initially unfamiliar with the "it does what it's told" military philosophy, but it was soon made to understand that the military wasn't asking it to use this coating.

So, Checkmate produced tens of thousands of magazines to the specifications demanded — and they were complete garbage. The phosphate coating gave these magazines the texture of fine

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Beretta's "sand" magazine has a slick PVD coating that sheds sand very well. The grooves down the side of the magazine body greatly reduce how much contact the 17 cartridges have with the magazine body, making for reliable feeding.

sandpaper, and the oil trapped by the phosphate helped sand to stick like glue. Compare them with magazines coated in lapping compound, and you'd be pretty accurate. An entire generation of servicemen has some serious beef with the M9 because of these magazines, and it wasn't even Beretta's or Checkmate's fault. Such is the injustice associated with bureaucracy.

Beretta, on the other hand, developed a beautiful 15-round sand-resistant magazine in the mid-'90s, and an improved 17-round version is what would ship with the M9A3. It's coated with a high-lubricity PVD finish that feels slippery in the hand and does a beautiful job of shedding sand. There are also two channels that run up the sides of the magazine body. These channels keep cartridges inside the magazine from touching the mag



The frame also has a generously beveled magazine well. The larger opening speeds along magazine reloads, especially for newer shooters.

body, allowing sand to fall through the magazine without getting trapped by the cartridges.

Where is the A2? In spite of recent rumors and published "reports" that the U.S. Army was not interested in considering Beretta's M9A2 or M9A3 offers, the U.S. Army's Contracting Officer contacted Beretta USA on January 9th, 2015, indicating that this was not correct and saying, "The ECP has not been rejected and is still being evaluated."

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The M9A3 represents the most sensible approach to improving our forces' capabilities with their issued sidearm. It offers significant upgrades at minimal expense.

PERFORMANCE

LOAD	WEIGHT (GRS.)	VELOCITY (FPS)	ES	SD	AVERAGE GROUP (IN.)	BEST GROUP (IN.)
Federal Premium Hydra-Shok	147	908	18	6	2.02	1.57
Winchester FMJ	115	1,166	50	19	2.26	1.80
Hornady Critical Defense FTX	115	1,110	34	13	2.82	2.18

If the military should elect to save some coin, it would do our servicemen a favor by adopting the M9A3. The paperwork and cost associated with this simple update is much less than the MHS program, which is already estimated at \$1 billion to cover the costs of pistols, spare parts, holsters, cleaning gear and training. Further, new pistols are not delivered overnight. If the results of an MHS competition are not contested, it could take five years to deliver enough hardware to begin replacing the M9. With the M9A3, troops would get the updates they really do need, and taxpayers would get a break. Everybody wins.

Should that happen, Beretta is prepared to retrofit as many of the M9A3's features onto as many M9s currently in service as possible, which would include permanently bonding and attaching a Pic rail to the dustcover. These retrofitted pistols would bear the M9A2 designation.

Our Thoughts The M9 follows an exacting test and verification process before earning its Mil-Spec rating. After assembly, an M9 follows its own path through magnetic particle inspection (MPI), reliability testing in water tanks, proof-round testing and another MPI test. After that, pistols are tested from a fixed Ransom Rest on a 50-meter indoor range to verify that they can place 10 shots of military ball in a group that does not exceed 8 centimeters, or about 3.15 inches. During one of two recent visits to Beretta USA's factory, G&A Editor Eric Poole confirmed that the M9A3 does in fact exceed these standards, even when parts are randomly interchanged with 12 other pistols. It really is a strenuous test.

The M9 celebrates its 30th year of service in 2015. It's seen a couple of big wars and a few small ones and has matured into an exceptional fighting pistol. We're told that by the second quarter of 2015, Beretta will be offering the M9A3 commercially. There's already a lot of excitement for it since it allows Beretta to bring the best of the best together in this one package. **G&A**



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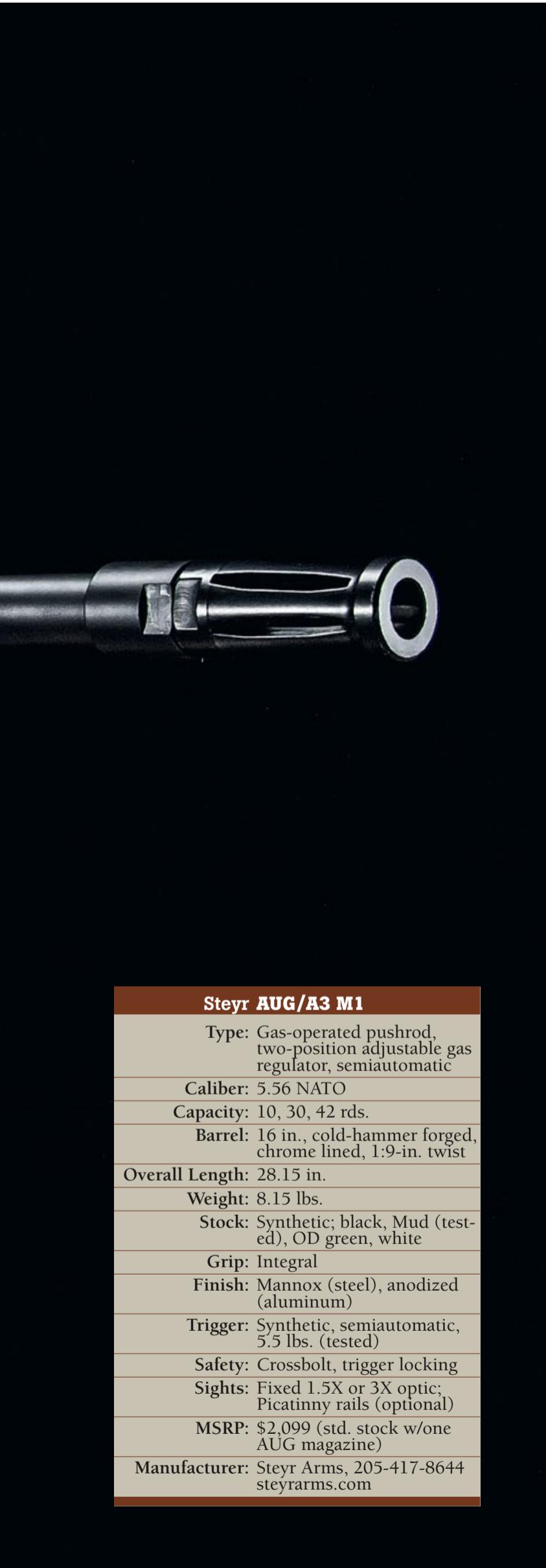
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CLEAR AS MUD

Nearing 40 years in maturity and now built in the U.S., the Steyr AUG remains incredibly futuristic. **Is America finally ready for a bullpup?**

WORDS BY ERIC R. POOLE | PHOTOS BY SEAN UTLEY

IT SHOULDN'T GO UNNOTICED that Steyr celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2014. Named for the Austrian city in which the parent company was founded and is headquartered, Steyr has had several influential rifle and pistol designs since, perhaps none as famous and widely used as its "Armee Universal Gewehr," or AUG, translated as "Universal Army Rifle." (AUG is pronounced "A-U-G" rather than "ogg.")

Just 12 days shy of Steyr's official 150th birthday, Steyr Arms' CEO Scott O'Brien and Steyr-Mannlicher owner and CEO Dr. Ernst Reichmayer cut the ribbon and opened the doors to unveil a new 33,000-square-foot manufacturing headquarters in Bessemer, Alabama. As a point of record for collectors, Dr. Reichmayer presented the very first AUG A3 marked "Bessemer, AL" at this event to the city's mayor, Kenneth Gulley. (Surprised by the gift, Gulley seemed somewhat reluctant and uncomfortable accepting and being photographed or filmed with it, quickly handing it over to the city's chief of police. It was a bit comical to watch.)

The facility sports an impressive firearm gallery available to distributors, dealers and their customers who want to compare a wide range of models firsthand without having to maintain the expense of carrying custom-fit inventory. This facility was also designed to accommodate expected growth in domestic firearm manufacturing.

I was in attendance representing Guns & Ammo last April for this grand opening to learn what new products we could anticipate. It was there that I first learned about the new AUG/A3 M1, and during this visit, I was afforded the exclusive opportunity to join the assembly line and learn how the inner workings of an AUG came together. It just so happened that I was building one of the very first American-branded models for myself under the tutelage of Steyr's master gunsmith, Herbert Wohlmuth.

Steyr AUG/A3 M1

Type: Gas-operated pushrod, two-position adjustable gas regulator, semiautomatic

Caliber: 5.56 NATO

Capacity: 10, 30, 42 rds.

Barrel: 16 in., cold-hammer forged, chrome lined, 1:9-in. twist

Overall Length: 28.15 in.

Weight: 8.15 lbs.

Stock: Synthetic; black, Mud (tested), OD green, white

Grip: Integral

Finish: Mannox (steel), anodized (aluminum)

Trigger: Synthetic, semiautomatic, 5.5 lbs. (tested)

Safety: Crossbolt, trigger locking

Sights: Fixed 1.5X or 3X optic; Picatinny rails (optional)

MSRP: \$2,099 (std. stock w/one AUG magazine)

Manufacturer: Steyr Arms, 205-417-8644
steyrarms.com

In conjunction with Steyr's 150th anniversary, Steyr Arms celebrated the grand opening of its new manufacturing facility in Bessemer, Alabama. G&A Editor Eric Poole was trained in building the new AUG/A3 M1 by Master Gunsmith Herbert Wohlmuth.

America's AUG Though I could have opted for the traditional black, OD green or white stock options, I went with a new tan color Steyr calls "Mud." The process to assemble an AUG A3 M1 is assisted in part by proprietary fixtures and advanced pneumatic machinery. Assembling each and every little part only took me about 20 minutes, but in that time I was able to appreciate the unique procedures and eye for quality control that go into these builds. The experience culminated in a testfire in Steyr's indoor range.

The new AUG/A3 blends the decades-proven features and classic ergonomics of the original Steyr AUG with functional enhancements and modern manufacturing techniques that weren't available when it was first conceived back in the early '70s. Considering its modular bullpup configuration and heavy use of polymer and advanced alloys, the AUG was well ahead of its time when it was first adopted by the Austrian army in 1977. The Austrians refer to their AUG as the StG 77, which replaced the StG 58, a licensed FN FAL. It still carries the responsibilities of serving as the standard-issue rifle of the Austrian *Bundesheer* and that country's law enforcement. The U.S. Customs Service — now U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, also known as I.C.E. — used the AUG P from 1987 until 2007. The AUG even saw limited service in the hands of our FBI. Not long after a few AUGs found their way into the FBI armory at Quantico, a push for standardization of the U.S. military's M16 and M4 effectively swept through federal law enforcement and state agencies.

The AUG was originally a select-fire rifle that got its full-auto capabilities from a unique trigger pack that slides into the stock. Invented by Austrian Heinrich von Wimmersperg at the end of World War II, the Spz-kr-type progressive trigger is used on select-fire AUG models. The trigger works by pulling it halfway for semiauto fire or drawing it all the way rearward to engage automatic fire. No levers are present to manually select the mode of fire.

A short-stroke gas-piston system featuring two stainless steel guide rods operates the AUG. Only the right guide rod serves as the action rod, transmitting the rearward motion of the piston to the bolt carrier. The left-hand guide rod can be operated in conjunction with the forward-located charging handle to cycle the action. During firing, this charging handle is nonreciprocating and can be used as a forward assist and bolt hold-open. The AUG/A3 also features a two-position gas regulator. The first setting is used for normal operation, and the second position is available for unusually fouled conditions.

The AUG was always designed to fire from the closed bolt.



The AUG/A3 M1 is quick and easy to fieldstrip once you've done it a few times. Due to its generally clean operation, fieldstripping the AUG is more of a fun practice you do to impress friends who exclusively shoot AR-15s. If, after several thousand rounds, you're concerned about giving the AUG a detailed cleaning, disassembling the bolt-carrier group isn't hard to figure out either.

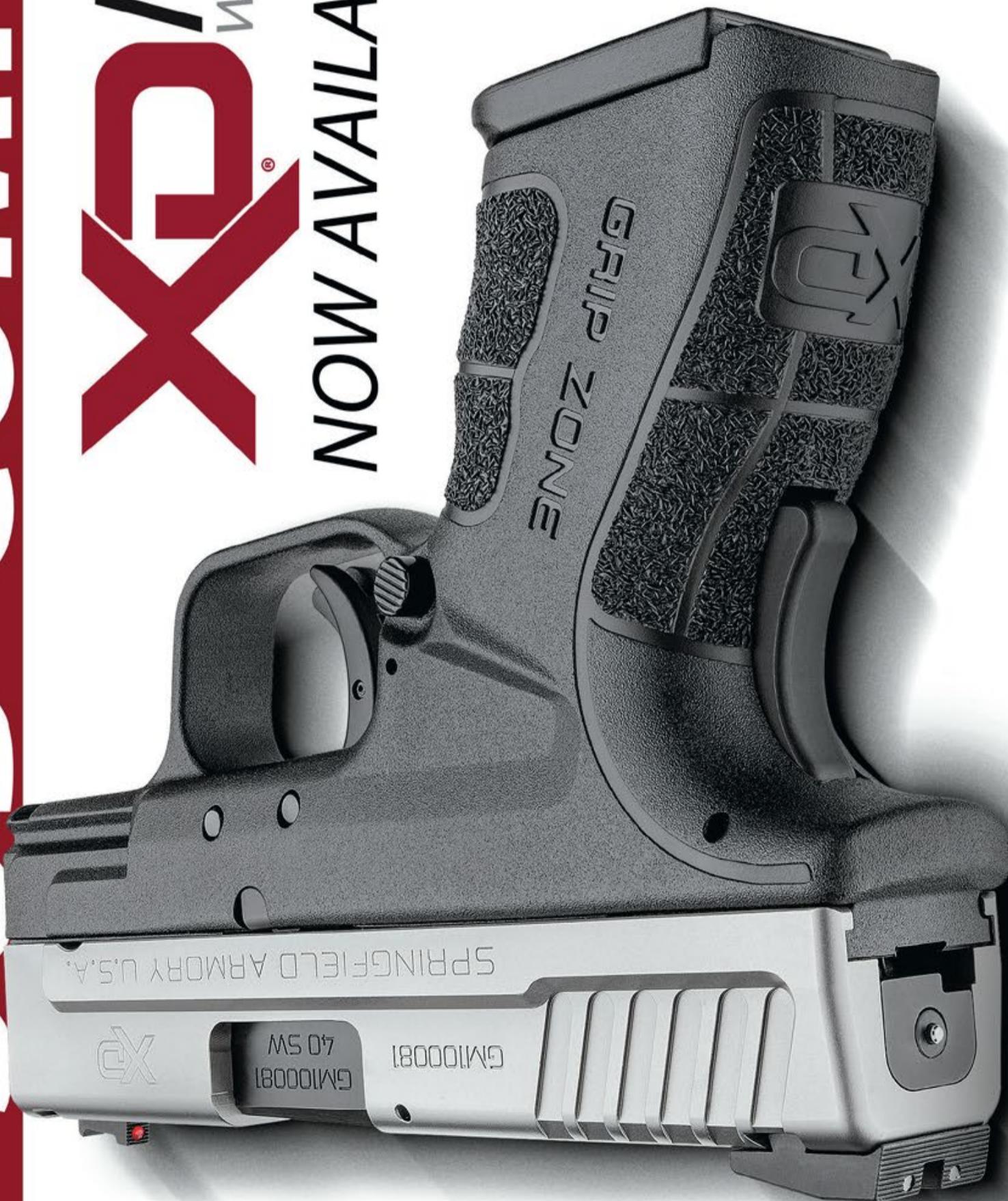
This layout improves reliability by keeping burnt residue and airborne particles out of the chamber. The rotating bolt has seven radial locking lugs and contains a claw extractor that forms the eighth locking lug. Heat behind the barrel is virtually nonexistent, meaning that parts last longer even if the AUG is subjected

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to sustained fire. Whereas Eugene Stoner's AR had a reputation for being filthy, the AUG seems to have been designed for an army that didn't like to spend its spare time cleaning rifles.

Adaptability was on the mind of Steyr engineers early on because the AUG A1 was designed to be a part of a larger family. In fact, what many AUG collectors find is that parts such as the select-fire trigger pack will actually fit right into one of these newer AUG/A3s. Unlike a number of other firearms importers, Steyr has made a great effort to offer its U.S. customers a rifle that's held to the same spec as the ones produced for the world in Austria.

"There are only a handful of AUG parts to meet U.S. part count requirements," says Mike Nischalke, a U.S. representative for Steyr Arms. "Ninety percent of the AUG/A3 is made in Austria. Of the American-made parts on these rifles, two are the receiver and the barrel. The other parts are small pieces like the magazine floorplate, which has no functional purpose other than holding the magazine spring within."

Sum of Its Parts The AUG/A3 is the third generation of a bullpup-configured rifle initially developed for the 5.56 NATO cartridge with a 1:9-inch twist. Though the Steyr AUG/A3 is built using mostly Austrian pieces, most would agree that the American model is better than its predecessors.

Mechanically, the AUG still utilizes a short-stroke gas-piston system with dual gas-adjustment settings. This method of operation was far ahead of its time when it was first adopted for military use in 1977, especially when you compare it with individual carbines developed in the 1960s and '70s.

This model is still able to accept earlier 30-round AUG magazines (Magpul is about to offer aftermarket AUG mags, if you haven't heard), but if you're hell bent on using M4 magazines because you managed to hoard a sizeable collection during the 2012/2013 gun-buying panic, Steyr offers another stock that accepts STANAG magazines. Note that AUG magazines are also offered in 10- and 42-round capacities. It's my opinion, however, that Steyr's translucent 30-round magazines (translucent before anyone thought to make magazines out of see-through polymer) are far better quality. The AUG mags enjoy a better reputation overseas for being the most reliable detachable mags built for a NATO rifle. In part, this rep can be credited to the strong, yet elastic qualities of the polymer body and the rear lockup tabs, which help to keep the bullet nose properly oriented with the chamber's feed ramps. Long before space-age polymers were used in making AR-type magazines, the AUG mag's rigid polymer



The AUG/A3 M1 features a two-position finger-adjustable gas regulator, one for normal operation and another for adverse conditions such as extended suppressor use. Don't be surprised if you never use this feature, though.

The quick-change barrel is standard with a 1:9-inch twist rate. Though it won't key-hole paper targets with heavier 75- or 77-grain bullets, the AUG does well with lighter bullets such as the 55- and 62-grain varieties.

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design could withstand more abuse than the aluminum-bodied mags currently fielded by most NATO countries.

With the ergonomics of the AUG/A1, universal fit and ambidexterity were common themes, but now the user can kick away brass by swapping out the bolt and removing and snapping an ejection port cover to the other side. Unfortunately, the aforementioned AUG/A3 stock that accepts AR-type magazines does not carry this ambidextrous highlight.

Range Time Operating a Steyr AUG can be a bit awkward for Americans more familiar with AR-type platforms, but practice will reveal just how comfortable and user friendly the AUG is. The manual of arms is very different than other modern semiautos, but once mastered, the AUG's weight distribution to the rear makes it quick to snap on target and comfortable to shoot from any position. Unlike an AR, much of the weight is in the rear of the stock, so shooters often perceive that the AUG weighs less than it actually does.

Like earlier AUGs, the A3 M1 maintains the design's famous quick-change barrel and foldable forward grip. The 16-inch heavy barrels of earlier versions give the entire rifle an overall length of just 28.15 inches. This makes for a tight and potentially discreet, yet versatile carbine when you consider that the M4 at its shortest collapsed-stock length averages 29 3/4 inches. This is ideal for military and law enforcement, which are concerned with operating from vehicles and in tight quarters, or civilians who are continuously tweaking personal defense plans.

Though the AUG presents such a short package, it somehow manages to keep sub-MOA accuracy. I don't quite understand it. When shooting the AUG, AR users are often mystified since the removable barrel isn't free floated. The barrel that accompanies each semiauto AUG/A3 is from FNH USA. These FN barrels are cold-hammer forged on Austrian mandrels from Steyr using the same steel FN utilizes for its legendary machine guns.

At the range, I observed a preference for 62-grain loads. Even with military-grade ammo, the AUG/A3 had no problems printing five-shot groups from 100 yards into 1 inch or less. This has to be the most accurate nonfree-floated carbine in existence.

The AUG/A3 is awesome, but it does have a few flaws. For one, the crossbolt safety has four sharp corners that will eventually eat your finger's flesh if you like to engage and disengage the safety between strings. I contacted Steyr Arms to register my complaint, only to be told that I could take a file and knock off the sharp corners.

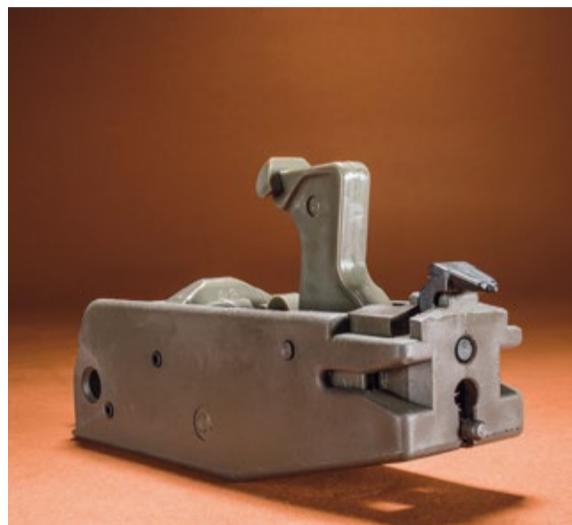
Second, the triggers on most bullpups suck when compared with most aftermarket AR triggers these days. In other bullpup rifles, this is usually due to a long transfer-bar system that has to manipulate a sear in a trigger pack that's closer to your shoulder than

The eight-lug AUG bolt assembly is reliable. An optional left-hand bolt can be ordered for an easy left-hand-eject conversion.



In addition to 10- and 30-round "waffle" mags, Steyr Arms offers this virtually indestructible design in a 42-round capacity.

The AUG's trigger pack is adequate. However, enthusiasts are hoping Geissele develops one like it did for the Israeli Tavor.



PERFORMANCE

LOAD	WEIGHT (GRS.)	VELOCITY (FPS)	SD	ES	AVG. GROUP (IN.)	BEST GROUP (IN.)
Hornady TAP	55	2,737	18	72	1.20	.87
Hornady TAP Urban	60	2,787	30	81	1.01	.75
Lake City SS109	62	2,948	28	72	1.04	.57
Silver State Armory OTM	77	2,642	11	27	1.13	.69

rails running at 12 and 3 o'clock, when attached, the entire setup echoes the slant-back fixed-power profile everyone thinks back to on the original AUGs. The top rail has 15 numbered slots in two sections for adding other accessories, but it also works to protect both sides of the elevation adjustment knob from being knocked around. The same description applies to the windage dial on the right except that the side rails on the optic only have four slots.

The M1's 16-slot High-Rail and 11-slot Short-Rail options afford users the opportunity to use virtually any other type of optic or manage unnecessary rail estate. Either rail length or optic is user interchangeable if one consults the owner's manual for basic disassembly procedures. They are simply attached to the receiver from underneath and secured by three hex-head screws. (Applying removable Loctite is recommended for each set of threads before installing.)

Atop the front of the receiver is a socket cup ready to accept a quick-disconnect sling swivel like the one provided with the AUG/A3 M1. Combined with sockets at the rear on each side of the stock, this bullpup is easily slung for carry.

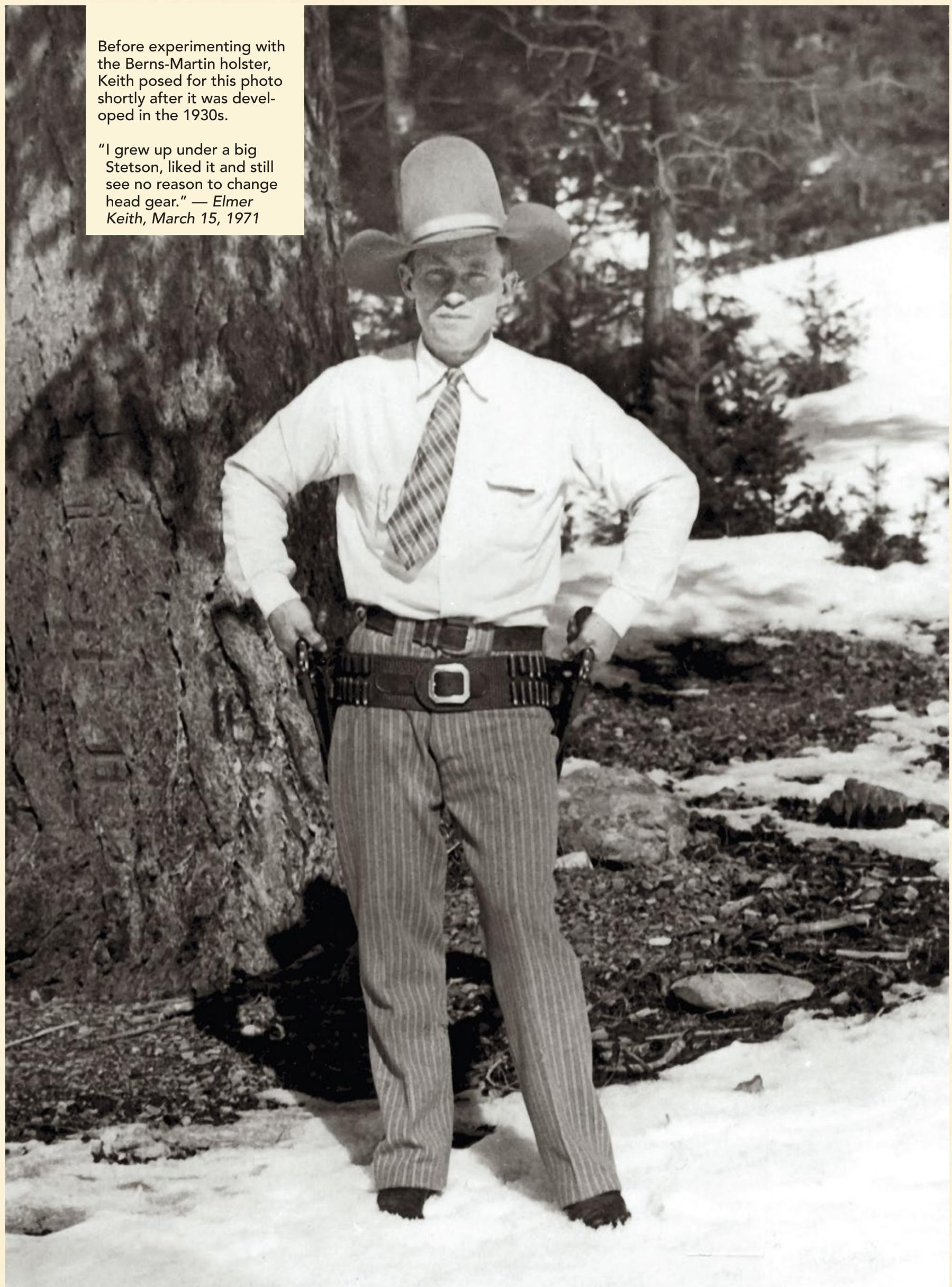
Still Futuristic Zero malfunctions occurred when this rifle was function tested in Steyr's equally impressive indoor range. I'm told that if a Steyr AUG doesn't shoot sub-MOA out of the box, they simply don't ship it. That's a bold accuracy guarantee but one I certainly have experienced for myself. I've worked with a Steyr AUG/A3 for nearly two years and the AUG/A3 M1 Mud example seen here since I built it last April. This experience makes for the fourth time I've tested an AUG. My conclusion? It won't be my last. **G&A**

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Before experimenting with the Berns-Martin holster, Keith posed for this photo shortly after it was developed in the 1930s.

"I grew up under a big Stetson, liked it and still see no reason to change head gear." — *Elmer Keith, March 15, 1971*



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STAFF REPORT

ELMER KEITH was easy to pick out in a crowd, usually seen with a lit cigar in his mouth and a 10-gallon Stetson slightly cocked on his head. The look had become a sort of trademark for him, whether he realized it or not.

After sitting through an industry event in London, England, sometime during the late 1950s, Keith is remembered to have walked up to the coat-check counter and requested his hat and coat. A gentleman returned with the Stetson and handed it to Keith, who began to carefully inspect it for his handwritten name inside the band to be sure it was indeed his. Pointing to the bowler hats popular in England at that time, the man said, “Mr. Keith, no one else would wear a hat like that. I think it is safe to say that this one is yours.” Keith irreverently grunted, toked his smoke and moved on about his day.

He's been called “The Last Cowboy,” having been born on March 8, 1899, and raised through the end of the Old West era. His words, controversial at times, were based on personal accounts spanning 60 years, which included bronco busting and service as a small-arms inspector at the Army's arsenal in Ogden, Utah, during World War II. If you're lucky, you may own an M1 with the initials “EMK” stamped into the stock, which represent Keith's acceptance mark. Such experiences were influential in forming the basis of his knowledge and opinions. His truisms are still considered as applicable today as they were when initially written, often being reprinted and quoted in studies on firearms.

During the 1920s and '30s, Keith was a rancher and hunting guide in Oregon and Idaho. It was during this period that he started putting pen to paper. He wrote 10 books in his lifetime, beginning with “Sixgun Cartridges and Loads” in 1936 and ending with his autobiography, “Hell, I Was There!” in 1979.

Though his first published work was an article in a 1924 issue of American Rifleman, he became widely known after devoting

his career to writing full time in the 1950s, ultimately joining the staff of Guns & Ammo in 1964. Keith cultivated a passion for hunting African game on the Dark Continent, returning several times. At home in Salmon, Idaho, he expanded his private collection of hunting rifles and bigbore revolvers while developing more potent bullets and loads for the .41 and .44 calibers. These developments resulted in several firearms and cartridges, which made him instrumental in the creation of products such as the legendary Smith & Wesson Model 29 revolver and its .44 Magnum.

In a letter to Guns & Ammo Editor George Martin dated February 1969, Keith finally responded to a repeated request to write up his guns for a feature article in the publication's 1970 annual edition. He emphatically declined, writing, “Afraid

you would be trying to crowd a hell of a lot in 3,000 words to try and describe my collection and also give loads for the various guns. Simply could not be done.”

He did have many firearms, most of which currently belong to family members through the Elmer Keith Estate Collection. However, on March 13th through 16th, 2015, fans will get the rare chance to own pieces of significant Elmer Keith history, including the renowned Corbett Tiger Rifle, a Jeffery .450/.400 boxlock.

“Yes, I have Jim Corbett's old .450-400-3-inch,” Keith described for a reader on April 26, 1968. “Rifle shows more use and less abuse than any rifle I ever owned; worn bright as a dollar and wood worn away from the steel ... [It's] still sound and accurate as [the] day made ... [I] never exhibited any of my guns anywhere.”

More than 140 pieces of the Elmer Keith Estate Collection are going to be sold at auction by the James D. Julia auction house. Here is an exclusive look at a sampling of G&A's favorites. For more information, visit jamesdjulia.com.

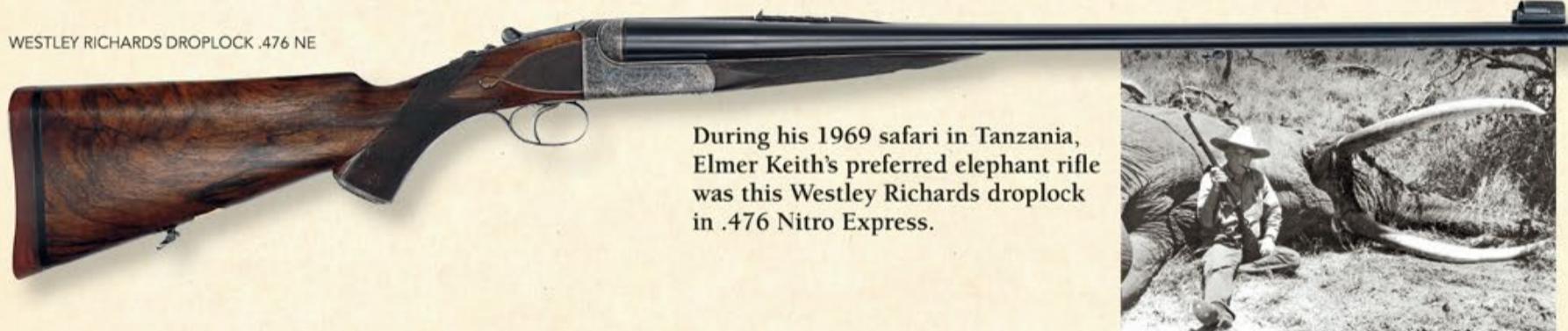


This Jeffery .400-bore double rifle (SN# 20176) is the very boxlock that was used by Col. Jim Corbett to save countless human lives from man-eating tigers in India between 1907 and 1938. Two specific tigers he successfully hunted accounted for killing more than 800 men, women and children.

COL. JIM CORBETT'S .450/.400 TIGER RIFLE

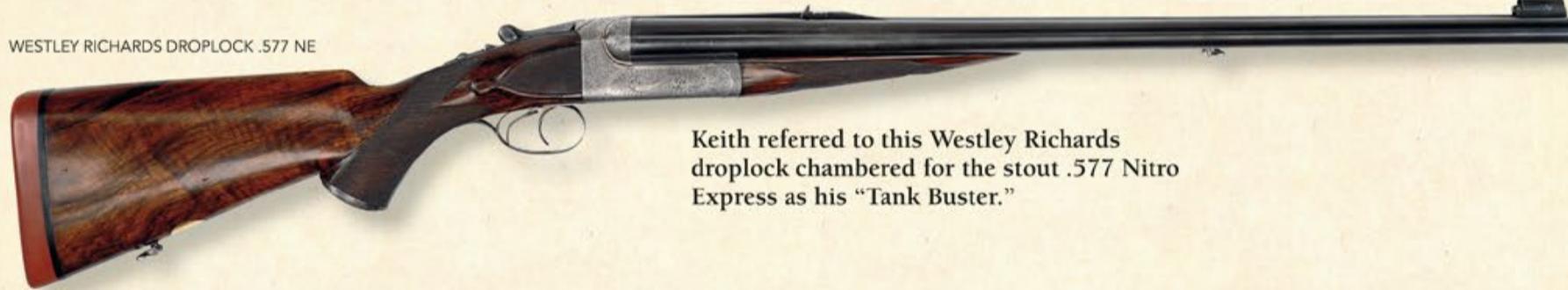


WESTLEY RICHARDS DROPLock .476 NE



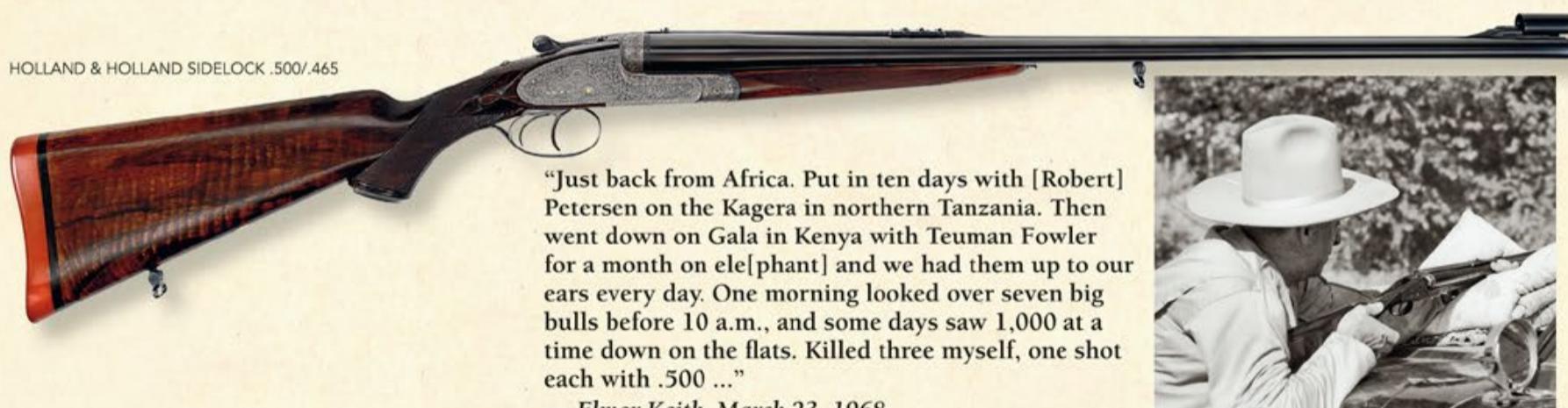
During his 1969 safari in Tanzania, Elmer Keith's preferred elephant rifle was this Westley Richards droplock in .476 Nitro Express.

WESTLEY RICHARDS DROPLock .577 NE



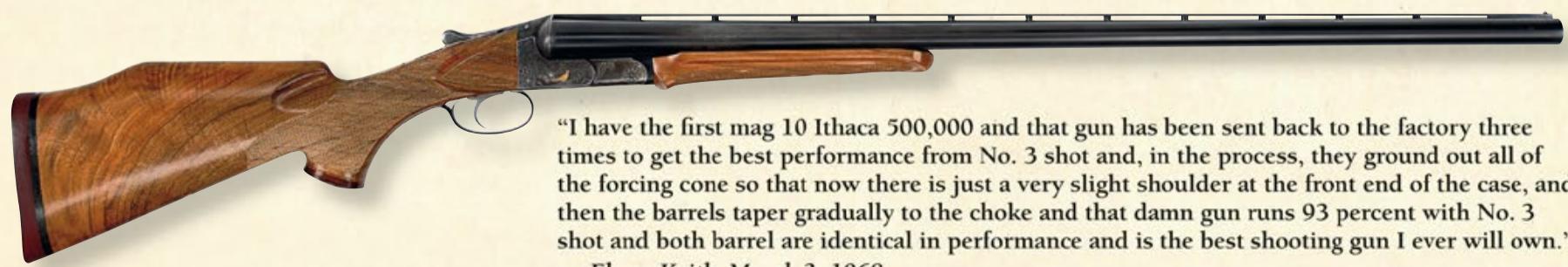
Keith referred to this Westley Richards droplock chambered for the stout .577 Nitro Express as his "Tank Buster."

HOLLAND & HOLLAND SIDELOCK .500/.465



"Just back from Africa. Put in ten days with [Robert] Petersen on the Kagera in northern Tanzania. Then went down on Gala in Kenya with Teuman Fowler for a month on ele[phant] and we had them up to our ears every day. One morning looked over seven big bulls before 10 a.m., and some days saw 1,000 at a time down on the flats. Killed three myself, one shot each with .500 ..." — Elmer Keith, March 23, 1968

ITHACA NID MAGNUM 10 GAUGE "THE FIRST," SN# 500,000, A GRADE 4E SPECIAL WITH GOLD OWNED BY MAJ. CHARLES ASKINS AND RESTOCKED TO ELMER'S SPECS IN 1962



"I have the first mag 10 Ithaca 500,000 and that gun has been sent back to the factory three times to get the best performance from No. 3 shot and, in the process, they ground out all of the forcing cone so that now there is just a very slight shoulder at the front end of the case, and then the barrels taper gradually to the choke and that damn gun runs 93 percent with No. 3 shot and both barrel are identical in performance and is the best shooting gun I ever will own." — Elmer Keith, March 3, 1968



COLT SAA LONG RANGE WITH SPECIAL SIGHTS AND
BISLEY HAMMER FOR JESS THOMPSON QUICK-DRAW RIG

"[The carved ivory grips] on my guns, I etched myself by taking a needle and scratching in the emblems then working them out deeper with [a] knife and tiny needle file and then blackening in the cuts."

— Elmer Keith,
January 25, 1969



COLT SAA NO. 5 .44 SPECIAL,
"THE LAST WORD IN FINE SIXGUNS"



RUGER SUPER BLACKHAWK PRESENTATION,
SN# 1806, FOR 1962, FACTORY ENGRAVED

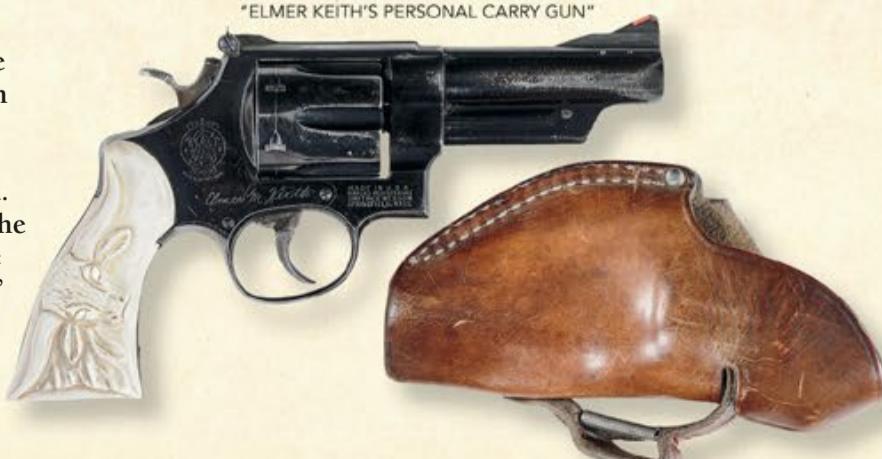
"I have four S&W .44 mags and two .41 S&W mags and have had a quarter inch removed from [the] rear end hammer spur so [it] won't hit [the] web of [my] hand, and also had all triggers thinned to just 3/8-inch wide and the sharp edge ground off as well. [I] guess S&W liked the idea, as I had them make my pair of .41 mags that way. I'd rather have my .44 mag, 7½-inch Ruger or 6½-inch S&W and my loads on elk in the timber at close to reasonable range than any .30 caliber rifle. [This] may sound crazy, but I can get penetration from the sixgun, and [I] know what it will do."

— Elmer Keith, January 16, 1969

SMITH & WESSON PRE-MODEL 29 .44 MAGNUM WITH HOLSTER,
PRESENTED TO KEITH BY SMITH & WESSON'S
CARL HELSTROM, FACTORY ENGRAVED



SMITH & WESSON MODEL 29 WITH SPARKS HOLSTER,
"ELMER KEITH'S PERSONAL CARRY GUN"



"I carry a 4-inch .44 S&W mag all the time as an officers gun with my own handloads of 22 grains 2400 and Keith 250-grain bullet. As a choice between the two makes, I will take the S&W every time."

— Elmer Keith,
May 1, 1969



CONSECUTIVE PAIR OF SMITH & WESSON MODEL 57s,
PRESENTED BY SMITH & WESSON IN RECOGNITION
OF .41 MAGNUM DEVELOPMENT



"I have killed four caribou with my 4-inch S&W .41 mags and one out at 400 yards; no five of them come to think of it, and one at 150 yards and three at 60 to 125 yards. Used the Remington factory soft-nose 210 grain ... A 6-inch barrel will give you about 80 feet more velocity, and thus has a little more power and longer sight radius and would be better for hunting."

— Elmer Keith, January 30, 1969

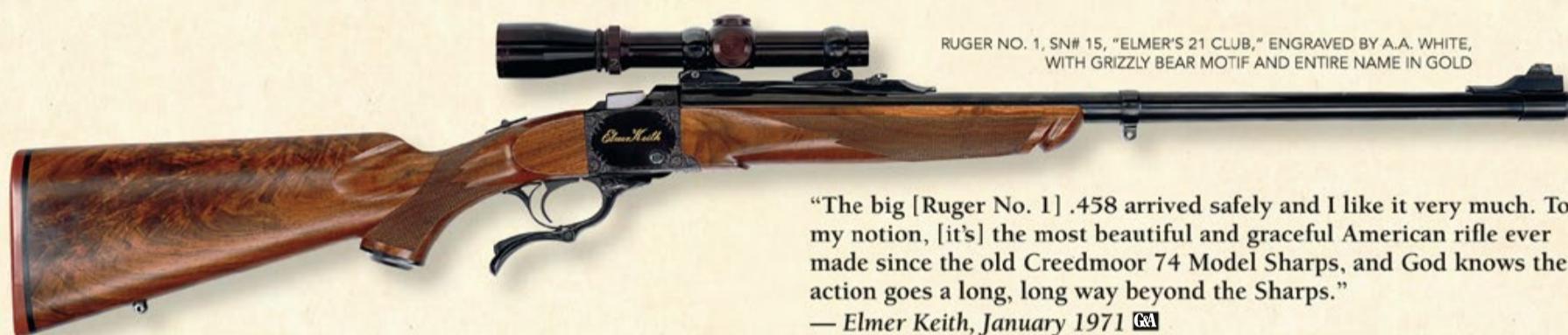
"Dear Frank [Pachmayr], if you get that .375 finished by April 5th, bring it up to the [NSGA] show and I can then [take] it home safely from there and avoid any shipping hazards."

— Elmer Keith, March 3, 1968

PACHMAYR CUSTOM M70 IN .375 H&H
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RUGER NO. 1, SN# 15, "ELMER'S 21 CLUB," ENGRAVED BY A.A. WHITE,
WITH GRIZZLY BEAR MOTIF AND ENTIRE NAME IN GOLD



"The big [Ruger No. 1] .458 arrived safely and I like it very much. To my notion, [it's] the most beautiful and graceful American rifle ever made since the old Creedmoor 74 Model Sharps, and God knows the action goes a long, long way beyond the Sharps."

— Elmer Keith, January 1971 **GA**

FIREARM PHOTOS COURTESY OF JAMES D. JULIA AUCTIONEERS, FAIRFIELD, MAINE, JAMESDJULIA.COM

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Tale of the Monkey Tail

The unique Westley Richards capping breechloader was recognized as one of the best of its breed, and it lived on well into the era of the self-contained cartridge.

BY GARRY JAMES | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JILL MARLOW



As befits its superior status, the sporting Monkey Tail is more finely fitted out and finished. The barrel is longer, and details are simply more elegant. The shorter Portuguese carbine is virtually identical to the British No. 5 with the exception of sling swivels instead of a sling bar and a beefier front sight to accommodate a bayonet lug. It is thought that the ring bar was deleted and that the studded band and swivels were added after purchase by the Portuguese.

THE SUCCESS of the Westley Richards capping breechloader is all the more fascinating when one realizes that its perfection came at a time when it really should have become instantly obsolete.

Such was not the case. This percussion, paper-cartridge rifle really hit its stride during the ascendance of self-contained metallic ammunition when other arms of its ilk were being converted or sold surplus, and it continued in service virtually to the close of the end of the 20th century.

The Birmingham, England, firm of Westley Richards (which is still in operation) was founded in 1812 by William Westley Richards. In 1840, the company's helm was turned over to William's son, Westley Richards, and under his management the company thrived. While never enjoying the cachet of some of the better-known London makers such as Purdey and Holland & Holland, nonetheless Westley Richards produced a large number and variety of highly regarded sporting arms, along the way amassing a goodly quantity of important and valuable patents.

Military interests were not forgotten either, perhaps one of the most important being WR's patent number 633 of 1858 for a percussion breechloading rifle/carbine of unique design. The action involved a spring-loaded lever that extended across the top of the stock over a portion of the wrist. Attached to the forward under-part of the lever was a fore-and-aft sliding breechblock that incorporated a brass plunger at its front. The lever, when in the open, upright position, was responsible for the arm's nickname, "Monkey Tail."

The effectiveness of this clever mechanism was attendant upon



The lever, in its upward position, shows how the Westley Richards breechloader gained its nickname, "Monkey Tail." The brass plunger, mounted on its steel sliding block — a feature integral to proper sealing of the breech — can also be seen.

a special cartridge that involved a conical projectile, charge and paper wrapper, at the base of which was a greased felt wad designed to completely seal the breech. The round was ignited by a musket-size percussion cap and standard external hammer.

The rear inside of the action body was cut with a sloping opening into which a correspondingly angled lug on the rear of the breechblock nestled when the lever was closed. When the gun fired, the block moved slightly rearward, effectively locking the action. Due to the force of the explosion, the felt wad is pushed back, expanding against the plunger, preventing gases from escaping.

Initially, the plunger was equipped with a hook to draw out the wad, but this proved unsatisfactory, and, similar to the Callisher & Terry Carbine, which also employed a wadded cartridge, it was found more effective to push the used wad forward with a subsequent round, where it provided a cleaning function

with the next firing.

At the time of the Monkey Tail's introduction, the standard British cavalry carbine was a short variant of the 1853 Enfield rifled muzzleloader. This does not mean that authorities were not looking to the future, and almost concurrently with the Pattern 1856 Cavalry Carbine, which was only meant to hold a space until something better came along anyway, improved breechloaders such as the 1855 Sharps, Starr, Callisher & Terry and Greene were being studied, some being issued in limited quantities to selected units for further evaluation.



Like the carbine itself, the lock of the Portuguese-contract Westley Richards breechloader mimics that of the Pattern No. 5 British-issue arms in all but the markings. The sporting lock features the refinement of a push-on safety. Both have their date of manufacture within the distinctive WR triangle trademark.



The tops of both Portuguese and sporting Monkey Tail levers have the Westley Richards patent ID and logo.



Barrels are marked, though in different places, signifying the carbines' Whitworth rifling system, which is unlike that of the more famous hexagon style used in muzzleloading target and military rifles in that it is octagonal.



Both carbines are stamped with serial numbers, British proofs and bore size "52" (.451), though the military piece also has a Portuguese-contract designation.



Stock storekeeper markings on the Portuguese Monkey Tail indicate that this piece was still in service as late as 1880, though the carbine was manufactured in 1867. "FA" stands for *Forcas Armas* (Armed Forces).

still some carping about various features including the chamber length. The problems were duly addressed, and the gun was formally approved in early 1862. A number of the carbines were issued to the 10th and 18th Hussars and the 6th Dragoon Guards, members of which regiments made it known that they were wholly satisfied with the arms, resulting in an order for 20,000 more.

Still, there were some difficulties, especially when it was discovered that the new guns could not handle the old-pattern cartridges. Finally, in 1866 the fifth and final pattern was prepared and accepted. As the carbine finally appeared, it had a 20-inch barrel; an overall length of 2 feet, 11 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches; and a weight of 6 pounds, 8 ounces. Caliber was .450-.451 and rifling twist 1:20 inches.

Tests proved that the Monkey Tail was reliable and rugged and that the breech system provided a virtually perfect seal.

As good an arm as the Monkey Tail was, by the time of its appearance (1865 to 1866), the British had already decided to

Some, such as the Sharps and Terry, fared better than others, but they still had perceived shortcomings. Enter the Monkey Tail. As well as its unique action, the WR Carbine employed a variant of the Whitworth polygonal rifling (earlier on, Westley Richards, along with famed British engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel, had much to do with the development of Sir Joseph Whitworth's system), which, unlike the usual hexagonal bore seen in Whitworth target and military muzzleloaders, was eight-sided and not extremely angular.

The first pattern WR Carbine was submitted to the British Ordnance Select Committee in 1860, beginning a series of byzantine changes and requirements (typical of most government selection processes, I suppose). In short form, the Monkey Tail's progress from wannabe status to justification goes thusly: The premier submission was rejected because of complaints about a substandard finish. In that same year, an improved model was offered, which eliminated the hook on the plunger and a central spike that had been subsequently incorporated in the design in an attempt to help expand the greased wad. Both were felt to be superfluous. This one, too, was rejected, so a third version was presented, which was grudgingly, provisionally accepted.

In 1861, a fourth pattern was sent to the Committee, and this was adopted and produced in some quantity, though there was

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The Portuguese Carbine rear sight is the same as that used on the British-issue Pattern No. 5 Carbine, though the sporter not only includes a ladder graduated to 900 yards but a stationary notch and two platinum-lined flip-ups.



The sporter's front sight is a drift-adjustable front blade set within an elegant oval base.



The Monkey Tail's nipple drum area was generous and protected the top of the stock area from unwarranted erosion due to the exploding percussion cap. Nipples were of a special pattern and platinum lined.



Many Westley Richards Monkey Tails were equipped with butt traps to hold ramrod attachments and cleaning tools.



As with some Monkey Tail volunteer-style rifles, the middle band on the sporter was included strictly to provide attachment for the sling swivel.



Barrels are marked with both bore (.451) and chamber (.483) designations.

convert their old Enfield Rifle-Muskets over to the Snider System, which chambered a centerfire metallic cartridge. A carbine version of the Snider was also approved, and though attempts were made to try and convert the Westley Richards to a metallic round, officials decided to keep the Snider Carbine for the sake of commonality of ammunition. The unconverted Westley Richards in stores were reissued to yeomanry units, who happily retained them well into the 1880s.

The cartridge ultimately chosen for the carbine consisted of a 400-grain, .468-diameter bullet backed by 2 drams (55 grains) of powder.

Depending upon the period and model of Monkey Tail, some rifles and carbines had single or double butt traps to contain tools for cleaning and servicing the firearms. All had clearing/cleaning rods beneath the barrels, and some were fitted with eyelets for securing Enfield-style chained snap caps.

While all this official rigmarole was going on, Westley Richards had not been idle concerning other avenues of opportunity for the Monkey Tail. Sporting carbines and rifles were sold commercially as hunting and target arms, and foreign contracts were sought, the earliest being a number of carbines/rifles sent to the New Zealand Provisional Government in the 1860s and the states of Victoria



A 1960 advertisement from Golden State Arms in Pasadena, California, offering the Portuguese Monkey Tail for \$24.95. Along with Snider Carbines (which sold for \$19.95), Golden State imported hefty quantities of rifles and carbines from Portugal. GS' claims to the contrary, no Westley Richards were imported during the Civil War or saw service with the Confederacy.

and South Australia in Australia, and in 1866 through 1867, Portugal bought 8,000 rifles, 2,000 carbines and 1,000 pistols.

Today the most common Monkey Tails seen are the Portuguese contract guns, as large numbers were imported into the United States in the late 1950s/early '60s by Golden State Arms of Pasadena, California. Despite the guns being dated on their locks

post-1865, Golden State's marketers inferred that they had been imported by the Confederacy during the Civil War. The simple fact is that no known Monkey Tails were used by either side.

It is supposed that initially, the Portuguese carbines were similar to the British Pattern, but that later, in Portugal, they were altered for artillery use by having their ring bars removed, sling swivels added and the smooth barrelband replaced with one featuring a bayonet stud. I'm not entirely convinced that this is the case, but I've been unable to prove it conclusively one way or the other. Apparently, the bayonets used with the Portuguese Monkey Tails were similar to the yataghan style used with the British Martini-Henry but sporting a brass hilt rather than a steel one. In any event, they are extremely rare and seldom seen today.

Even though the self-contained cartridge was now the military norm worldwide, the Monkey Tail was so highly thought of that

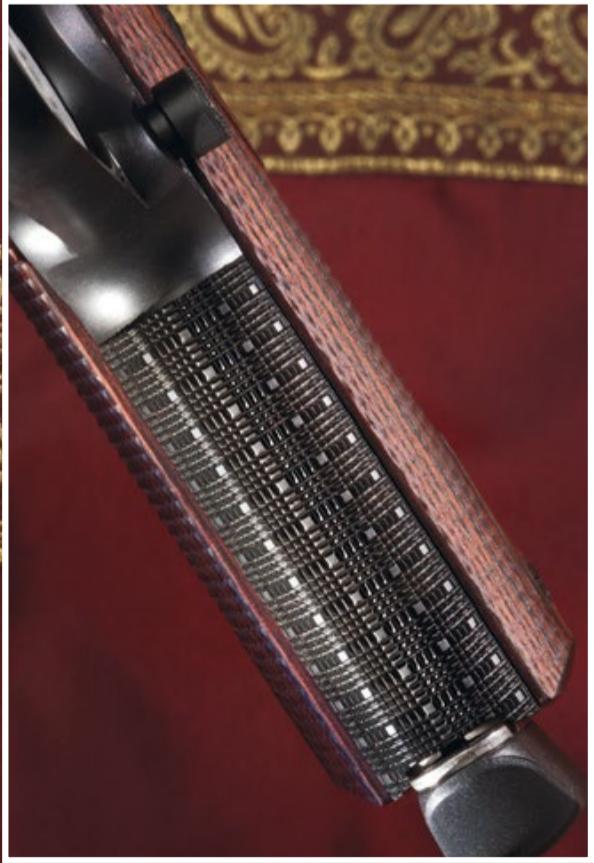
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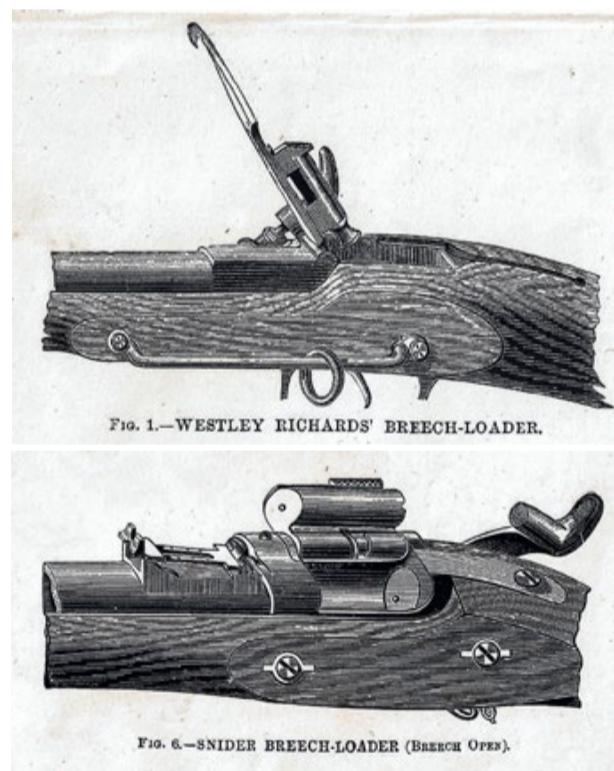


See the selection here:
UmarexUSA.com/gunsammo

James' evaluation Monkey Tail load consisted of a nitrated paper envelope; 55 grains of Goex FFFg blackpowder; a .458, 400-grain bullet; and a .487 greased felt wad.



James found the Westley Richards Monkey Tail sporter to be a delight to shoot. It was reliable and could be fired many times in succession without undue fouling.



The Westley Richards Monkey Tail Carbine and its ultimate usurper (in British Service), the Snider. Unlike the Westley Richards, which used a paper cartridge and separate igniting percussion cap, the Snider chambered a self-contained metallic cartridge.

Westley Richards was able to keep the system alive for a good number of years. A good quantity of Monkey Tails were ordered by South Africans in the late 1870s and used to effect during the First Boer War of 1881. At the Battle of Majuba (1891), around 500 Boers, a good number of them armed with Westley Richards rifles, trounced a superior force of Martini-Henry-wielding British troops. Apparently, WRs were

particularly favored by the Orange Free State, as many had their stocks deeply incised with "O.V.S." (Oranje Vrystaat) and are found with datings into the mid-1880s.

Shooting the Monkey Tail For my shooting evaluation, I located a very nice-condition sporting Westley Richards Monkey Tail that, with the exception of the usual civilian niceties such as checkered grip and wrist, fancier rear and front sights, and push-on external hammer safety catch, was pretty much the same gun as those sold to New Zealand and Australia. Barrel measurement is 24 inches, overall length a handy 41½ inches. The lock is stamped with the maker's name and triangle trademark surrounding the date of manufacture, 1863.

Condition externally, mechanically and within the bore is very good to excellent. After some experimentation, I constructed cartridges consisting of a 400-grain .458 bullet, nitrated paper, 55 grains of Goex FFFg blackpowder and a .487 wad impregnated with a



A round is loaded into the WR by opening the lever and inserting it as far into the breech as possible. Closing the lever will seal the plunger against the cartridge's greased felt base wad.

50/50 mix of beeswax and tallow.

The cartridges loaded into the breech smoothly and were securely seated with the gun's brass plunger when the lever was lowered. Ignition (using RWS musket caps) was 100 percent, gas escape was nil, and recoil, while stout, was manageable.

From a rest at 50 yards, groups were not particularly stellar (about 6 to 7 inches), though bullets were stabilizing and the spreads clustered to point of aim. I was able to fire 30 rounds in succession with no fouling hangups, so the seal/wad cleaning arrangement really does seem to work. As far as functioning, if this isn't the best capping breechloader I've ever fired, it's close to it. It was an extremely successful first outing.

Unquestionable improvements can be made in the accuracy department, and accordingly I've ordered a bullet mold from Accurate Molds (accuratemolds.com) that casts proper 400- and 480-grain .468 Monkey Tail bullets and will use the long Montana winter to construct some cartridges preparatory to an outing at the first spring thaw. If subsequent results are worthy, I'll post them anon.

I've fired a good number of conventional and oddball mid-19th century breechloaders, and it's hard to bring to mind one that works better than the Westley Richards. This must have been the thought of our Victorian forebears, for as I noted, the gun outlasted most, if not all, of its contemporaries. Not only did the Monkey Tail outclass its rivals, it outlived them. Would that we all could do the same. **GA**

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Merkel's Helix RX with
Meopta glass on plains game
in Robin Hurt's Namibia.*

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY LEN WALDRON





Set against the Groot Gamsberg Mountains, Robin Hurt's conservancy stretches over 250,000 acres. Where wild game was once shot to make room for cattle, herds of plains game now roam across nearly fenceless expanses.

A SINGLE RIFLE, two barrels — one for big bullets, the other for small ones — and a plan for a hunting adventure in one of the most sparsely populated but game-rich areas of the world. It may sound like the stuff of dreams and fables, but tightest shot groups and clearest glass are of no consequence when Africa chooses to raise her hand and change the game.

Twenty-four hours of travel from my home in Utah brought me over the ocean and through the dust to the Groot Gamsberg and Mt. Barry Wilderness area to the west-southwest of Windhoek, Namibia. Namibia sits just north of South Africa on the Atlantic coast. Roughly the size of Texas and home to only 2.1 million people, it has two distinct advantages for hunting. First, it is the second-least densely populated country in the world, just behind Mongolia, so the human growth and development that have plagued so many African habitats remain largely manageable. Second, the sustainable use of wildlife is part of the country's constitution, making active management a priority.

These factors brought legendary East African Professional Hunter (PH) Robin Hurt and his wife, Pauline, to Namibia 12 years ago. Having witnessed the corruption of his Kenyan homeland that banned hunting, ended active wildlife management and ushered in the decimation of wildlife by poachers, they found Namibia to be a paradise. In the Groot Gamsberg and Mt. Barry Wilderness area, Hurt has established a 250,000-acre wildlife conservancy. What was once a cattle and sheep farm almost entirely denuded of game is now a largely fenceless wilderness teeming with herds of plains game and mountains covered with the once-threatened antelope and zebra, the primary quarry for this hunt.

My PH for the hunt was Daniel Mousley, a native of Kenya and manager of Hurt's property. Mousley is that special blend of talent

Peaceful and serene, Hurt's main house provides a cool and comfortable respite after a day of hunting.



and training. His familiarity with the terrain and habits of the local game would prove critical over the course of the hunt when sudden variables such as wind changes or spooked game had to be managed. A good PH should not only be an exceptional hunter but a naturalist and teacher as well. Mousley is all of the above, and like truly great professionals, he leaves his clients with a richer experience for having hunted with him.

Germanic Firepower In a nod to Namibia's history as German West Africa, the rifle I carried seemed like a natural fit. Made in Suhl, Germany, Merkel's Helix RX is a straight-pull bolt-action rifle designed to quickly switch between calibers by simply exchanging the barrel and magazine. Merkel builds bolt heads in three sizes: mini (.222/.223), standard (.243 to 9.3x62) and magnum (7mm Rem. Mag. and .300 Win. Mag.). This system allows the owner to purchase one complete rifle and change calibers by switching out barrels and magazines. Also, within one bolt head, there can be several calibers, further reducing the cost as compared with purchasing a new rifle. This is particu-

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With horns glittering like black rapiers in the sun, a herd of oryx move across the Namibian plain.



Spot and stalk: The tight-knit team of Tracker Simeon Paulus and PH Daniel Mousley survey "the badlands" for signs of Hartmann's zebra.

larly helpful for countries such as Germany where regulatory constraints to purchasing an additional firearm can be both costly and time-consuming. The Helix owner has but to practice with one stock, one trigger and one optic system and can then switch between calibers depending on field requirements.

The RX is the more affordable field gun of Merkel's Helix line. Because it is available in builds with presentation-grade wood furniture and lavishly engraved receivers, its price can land out of range for many buyers. However, the RX is also available with a matte-gray synthetic stock and rubberized grip panels for all-weather use and no heartbreaks if the stock is knocked against African rocks or soaked with rain in a Bavarian forest. The barrel and receiver group sport a flat-black Parkerized finish that functionally and visually complements the rifle. The rifle features three-dot red or green fiber optic open sight pairs as well as Picatinny scope rails. I topped the rifle with a Meopta MeoStar R2 2.5x56RD scope. Made in the Czech Republic, the glass from this company is fantastic, and price is half that of many of its European competitors. The MeoStar R2 features a European-style center-dot illuminated reticle with an eight-stage adjustable intensity control, allowing the hunter to adapt to changing lighting conditions.

My strategy with the Helix in Namibia was to carry one rifle and two barrels to flexibly hunt everything from the sprightly klipspringer to the bulky Hartmann's zebra and other large plains game. The standard bolt head of the Helix can accommodate eight calibers from .243 to 9.3x62, so I could hunt from 85 grains up to 286 grains by simply changing the Merkel's barrel and magazine. My plan was to put to the test whether one rifle could do it all in Africa. I chose the .243 for the klipspringer. The cartridge is the

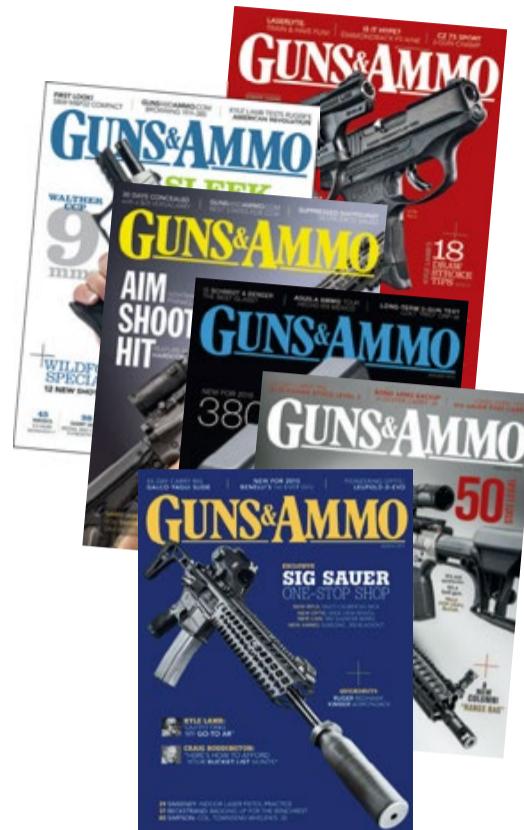


Mousley's zebra fence: Tracker Gabriel Armakutsi demonstrates how the zebras creep through the specially designed fence where cattle cannot bend and crawl. This keeps cattle off the gameland and allows the zebras to range freely.

smallest of the calibers for the Helix's standard bolt head and certainly adequate for the rock-dwelling pygmy antelope. The klipspringer has made a dramatic comeback in recent decades after being nearly decimated, as its hollow, spring-like hair was the preferred filling for saddle seats in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. "Klippies" are curious animals and respond to game calls. Our strategy, however, was to spot-and-stalk among the granite and quartz mountains and kopjes of the Mt. Barry Wilderness.

Mousley; our trackers, Simeon and Gabriel; and I traveled slowly up and through the valley floors, glassing into the cliffs for a glimpse of the agile and elusive klipspringer. Several times we were distracted by darting mountain hyrax, a small mammal that resembles a large ground-hog but is actually the closest living genetic relative to the African elephant. Our search continued for several hours throughout steep but scenic country that turns a rust red as the sun begins to set. After several hours, we spotted a pair of klipspringers bouncing among the rocks. They had seen us and moved quickly to higher ground, stopping occasionally to look back. Several times I was in a position for a shot, but the ram moved just seconds before I could set up. Finally, as he neared the summit of the ridgeline, I got a small window and put a single 85-grain Double Tap Barnes TSX round in precisely the right spot. The gold-medal klipspringer dropped in place, saving us a precarious track through the cliffs.

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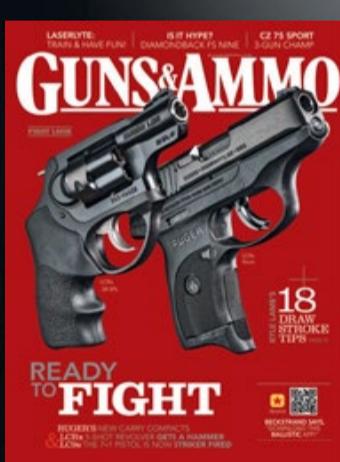
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Merkel Helix RX

Type: Straight pull, bolt action

Caliber: .243, 9.3x62mm (tested)

Capacity: 3+1 rds.

Barrel: 22 in.

Overall Length: 42 in.

Weight: 6 lbs., 6 oz.

Stock: Synthetic

Length of Pull: 14.4 in.

Finish: Flat black, Parkerized

Trigger: Two-stage direct

Sights: Three dot, red or green fiber optic

Safety: Tang-mounted manual cocking lever

MSRP: \$2,995

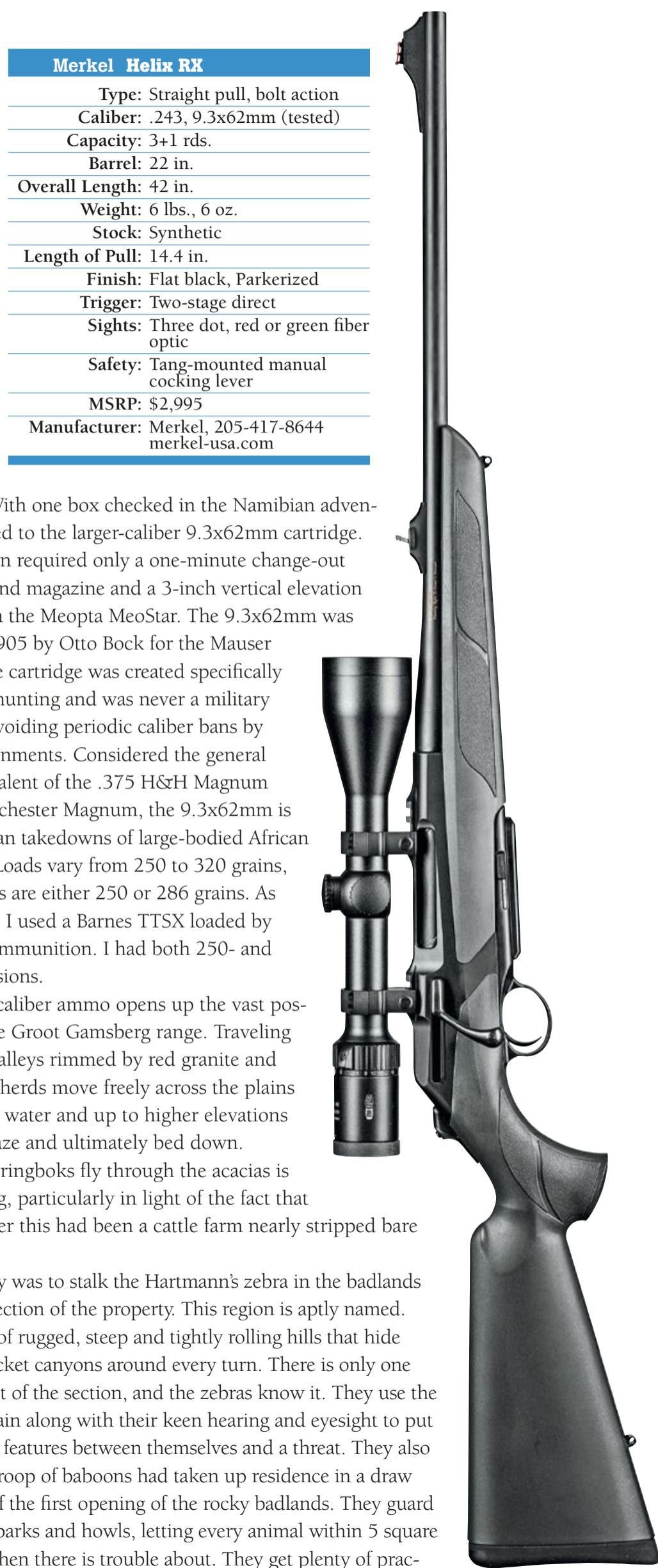
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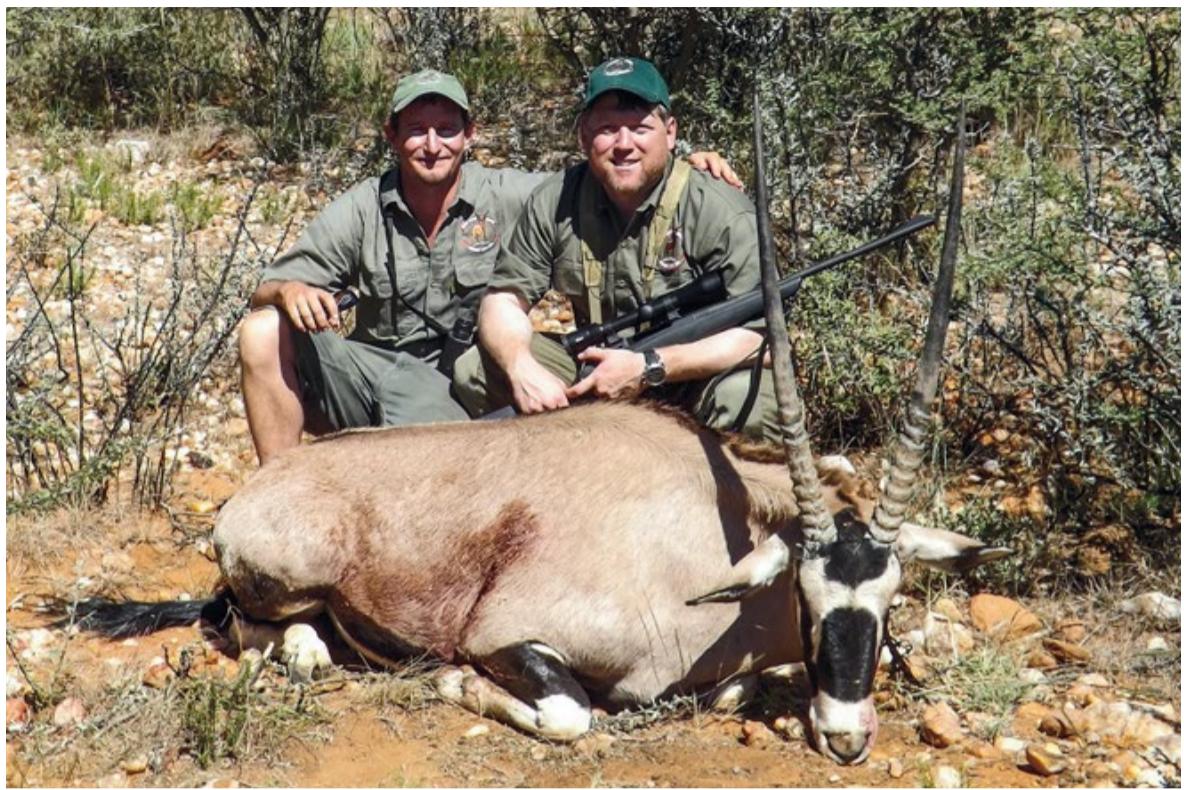
Scaling Up With one box checked in the Namibian adventure, I switched to the larger-caliber 9.3x62mm cartridge. The conversion required only a one-minute change-out of the barrel and magazine and a 3-inch vertical elevation adjustment on the Meopta MeoStar. The 9.3x62mm was designed in 1905 by Otto Bock for the Mauser 98 action. The cartridge was created specifically for big-game hunting and was never a military round, thus avoiding periodic caliber bans by colonial governments. Considered the general ballistic equivalent of the .375 H&H Magnum and .338 Winchester Magnum, the 9.3x62mm is capable of clean takedowns of large-bodied African plains game. Loads vary from 250 to 320 grains, but most loads are either 250 or 286 grains. As with the .243, I used a Barnes TTSX loaded by Double Tap Ammunition. I had both 250- and 286-grain versions.

The larger-caliber ammo opens up the vast possibilities of the Groot Gamsberg range. Traveling through the valleys rimmed by red granite and white quartz, herds move freely across the plains from shade to water and up to higher elevations to browse, graze and ultimately bed down.

Seeing 300 springboks fly through the acacias is heart-stopping, particularly in light of the fact that a decade earlier this had been a cattle farm nearly stripped bare of wildlife.

Our strategy was to stalk the Hartmann's zebra in the badlands in the north section of the property. This region is aptly named. It is made up of rugged, steep and tightly rolling hills that hide draws and pocket canyons around every turn. There is only one way in and out of the section, and the zebras know it. They use the wind and terrain along with their keen hearing and eyesight to put several terrain features between themselves and a threat. They also have help. A troop of baboons had taken up residence in a draw just forward of the first opening of the rocky badlands. They guard the gate with barks and howls, letting every animal within 5 square miles know when there is trouble about. They get plenty of prac-





Small to large: A one-minute barrel change and an optic adjustment were all the Helix required to adapt to the 9.3x62 cartridge and larger game such as this gemsbok.

tice, too, as this area is also home to a healthy leopard and cheetah population that doesn't go home at sunset for cocktails and stories.

We found the zebras, sometimes in small groups of two or three, other times in herds of several dozen. The Hartmann's zebras are larger and more rugged than their Burchell's cousin and can accelerate up and over the rocks. Day after day we were thwarted, some days by baboons, other days by shifting wind and once by a startled young bull kudu who went ripping across the adjacent mountainside just as we were setting up for a shot. Whatever luck I had brought with me had been used up the first evening on the klipspringer. These zebras were strong, smart and cagey, and taking one would be a grinding test of perseverance.

Though we spent most mornings in the badlands pursuing the zebras, the afternoons and evenings left me free to explore the vastness of Hurt's conservancy. The area is heavy with game that is free to roam the territory. Adjacent cattle farms are kept in check by an ingenious fence set up by Mousley that takes advantage of the zebras' and antelopes' ability to creep. Cows can't bend down and crawl, but the plains game can, thus allowing the game migratory passage across farmland while the cattle are kept inside the fences. On the first afternoon, I took a respectable oryx that became table fare for most of the week. The 9.3x62 dropped the bull antelope with only a minimal track. We weren't the only hunters in the area; along the way back to the lodge, we found the remnants of a freshly killed oryx downed by a cheetah. It was a brutal reminder of the checks and balances nature enforces.

Adapt and Adjust South African hunter and Kruger Park Ranger Harry Wolhuter once wrote, "Fortune is apt to act freakishly at all times." Such was the case despite my best efforts to the contrary. A firing mechanism problem developed, causing frequent misfires. Was it ammo, a back part or the consequence of global travel? It was impossible to determine, even after a visit to an Austrian gunsmith in Windhoek. The concept had been sound. We had taken both small and large game with the same rifle, adjusting calibers to the conditions mid-hunt, but Africa had reasserted herself, and we would have to find a new tool to pursue the zebras.



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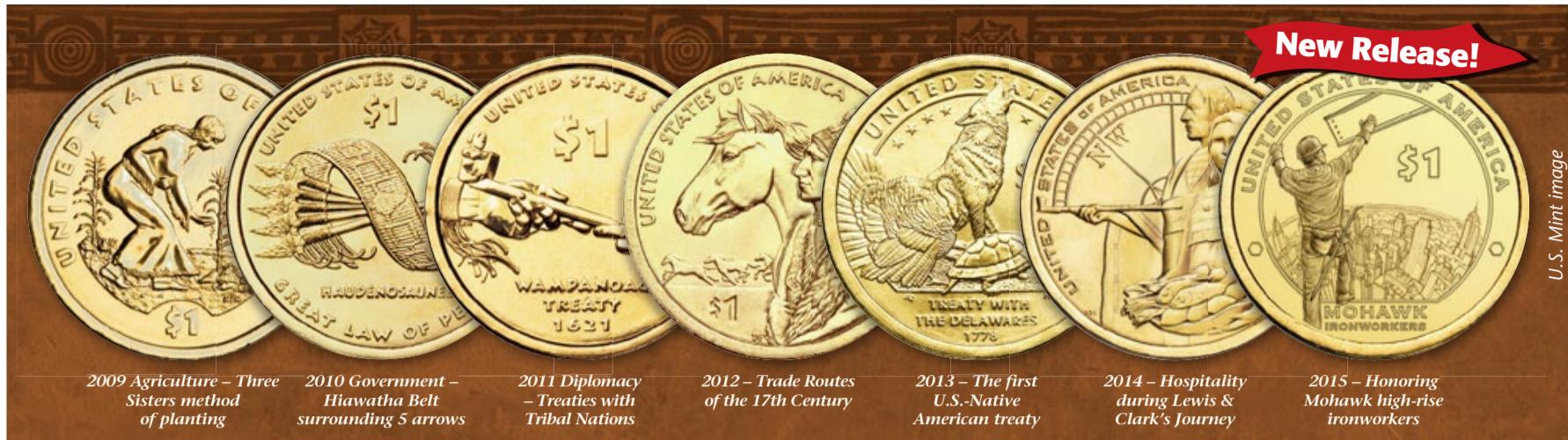


Our answer came in the form of a rifle built by Gall for Robin Hurt several years earlier. Edmund Gall had built a magnum-action safari rifle chambered in .340 Weatherby Magnum from a rifle whose barrel had been one part of a multibarrel takedown rifle. There is nothing subtle about Gall's rifles. They are strong, precise and European in feel. Topped with a Schmidt & Bender 3-9x50 scope, Hurt's magnum felt like carrying a BAR. The intelligence of his custom design choices became clear in handling the .340 Weatherby Mag. The mass of the rifle diminished the recoil considerably. After a long stalk on a red hartebeest, the .340 loaded with a 255-grain Barnes TSX buckled the animal in place, the same for another oryx. I had not fired or studied the .340 in detail before this trip, but it proved to be a flat-shooting, devastating round.

With practiced confidence and a bit of anxiety, we departed early on the last morning of my safari to try once more for a Hartmann's zebra. The wind was in our favor, and Simeon, our tracker, spotted a modest-size herd in the bottom of a small draw where they would have to exit past us into the larger valley. After a considerable stalk, we knelt atop a rock outcropping. Mousley wedged the shooting stick at an angle between the ground and the trunk of a small tree. The zebra came into range, and just as I pulled the trigger, the shooting stick slipped off the tree, and the shot went into the dirt in front of the zebra. For once, the terrain was in our favor as we peeled off the hill and into a lower shooting position above the zebra's route out of the draw. I put a single off-hand shot into the stallion from above and behind. The big .340 dropped him in his tracks.

As the old proverb says, "Man plans; God laughs." I suspect the same could be said for Africa. At the very least, she has a sense of humor. While we were able to take a klipspringer and two species of large plains game with the Merkel Helix, external forces conspired against us, and it took an Austrian ex-patriate's custom rifle to finally bring down the Hartmann's zebra. Then again, there is no glory in convenient victories. **G&A**

Hurt (at right) has managed his conservancy such that sustainable numbers of the once-threatened Hartmann's zebra can now be hunted in this region within Namibia.



U.S. Mint image

2009 Agriculture – Three Sisters method of planting 2010 Government – Hiawatha Belt surrounding 5 arrows 2011 Diplomacy – Treaties with Tribal Nations 2012 – Trade Routes of the 17th Century 2013 – The first U.S.-Native American treaty 2014 – Hospitality during Lewis & Clark's Journey 2015 – Honoring Mohawk high-rise ironworkers

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Marlin 1894



BACK IN THE SADDLE

THERE WAS A LOT OF MOANING and groaning from the gun world when Freedom Group purchased Marlin Firearms Company. Thoughts were that an iconic brand would be swallowed up and ruined by corporate America. When substandard Marlins started hitting dealers' shelves, it seemed that the fears had been realized. This was only partially true.

In the firearms world, Freedom Group is a corporate giant that some say has grown too big. However, it never

set out to ruin Marlin. Before Freedom Group acquired Marlin, it was doing a decent job of that already. It was building guns on antiquated and tired machines using tolerances on drawings with years of hand-sketched dimensional changes to account for the wear in tooling. It was just a matter of time until the horse gave out. Freedom Group saved Marlin, but what it did not realize was how much skilled labor was required to build what many regard as the best lever-action rifles in the world.



Marlin 1894

Type: Lever action, repeater
Caliber: .44 Rem. Mag. (tested), .44 S&W Special
Capacity: 10 rds. (.44 Mag.)
Barrel: 20 in., 1:38-in. RH twist, Ballard-type rifling
Overall Length: 37.5 in.
Weight: 6 lbs., 8 oz.
Stock: American walnut w/cut checkering, Mar-shield and rubber buttpad
Finish: Blue
Trigger: 3 lbs. (tested) with cross-bolt, hammer-blocking safety
MSRP: \$729
Manufacturer: Marlin Firearms, 800-544-8892, marlinfirearms.com

In 2011, the Marlin machines arrived in Ilion, New York, and when Freedom Group turned them on, what came out were not the Marlin lever guns we grew up with. According to Eric Lundgren, the man responsible for fixing Marlin, "Lever-action rifles are harder to make than most other platforms. Function is so dependent on bolt, lever and carrier design. Very small inconsistencies can mean that timing is off, and feeding issues can occur. In addition, a proper wood-to-metal fit is a critical indicator of quality

in a lever rifle. The machines that were brought in from North Haven, Connecticut, were old by any standard, and tolerances were very hard to maintain. Because of that, the quality of function and fit suffered."

The 1894 model perhaps suffered the most. Starting over was the only viable answer. Lundgren told G&A, "The 1894 line went through an overhaul in 2013. New engineering drawings, new manufacturing processes, new machinery, inspection criteria, etc., were put into place for



the 1894 line." That's not as easy as it might sound because every variation of the 1894 is a bit different. Lundgren continued, "Each caliber and rifle configuration reintroduction will require design and process acceptance by a team of cross-functional engineers, and each new model will go through complete testing and evaluation before it can be released for production. The process has taken over a year, and it is still ongoing. It will take a little more time to fill out the line as it was before the move."

Is the Model 1894 back? We can only guess, and G&A can only base our assumptions on the rifle provided for review. Could it have received some hand-work before it was delivered? Sure, though we could find no evidence of that when it was disassembled. Is it representative of an 1894 that we hope you'll soon be fondling down at the local firearms emporium. After talking with the suits at Freedom Group, they have their hat in their hand. They've been humbled by the Marlin experience, and are dedicated to fixing it.

Those suits are camo. These decision makers are gun owners, shooters and hunters, and if you're a gun owner, shooter or hunter, Marlin means something. Many readers

PERFORMANCE

LOAD	VELOCITY (FPS)	ES	SD	AVERAGE GROUP (IN.)	BEST GROUP (IN.)
Remington 180-gr. JSP	2,265	51	20	2.86	2.66
American Eagle 240-gr. JSP	1,843	27	12	2.44	2.12
Winchester 240-gr. JSP	1,891	33	15	2.09	1.88

NOTES: Muzzle velocity, extreme spread (ES) and standard deviation (SD) were obtained by firing 10 shots over a Shooting Chrony positioned 10 feet from the muzzle. Average group represents five five-shot groups fired at 50 yards with open sights from a sandbag rest.

have said their first rifles were a Marlin, and others of us grew up with a Marlin catalog instead of a wish book. Lundgren's first rifle was a Marlin 336; he's been hunting for 35 years and still owns that rifle. It's also partly because, like we told a "let-go" Freedom Group

executive who had proposed cutting corners to make Marlins more affordable, "Everyone has a little cowboy in them." Gun people want their cowboy to come out, and a good Marlin can make that happen.

The 1894 our staff reviewed was put together as well as any 1894 we've seen. Wood-to-metal fit was very nice, and the finish on both was exceptional. Moving parts moved like they should and made the things they are supposed to make happen, happen. Yes, the crossbolt safety is still there, and yes, the forearm is still a bit wider than necessary, but we'll give Marlin a pass because this rifle worked.

Thinking it would be absurd, we did not put a riflescope on the Marlin for testing. Ashley Emerson, originator of the Ashley Express Sight, known now as the XS Ghost Ring Sight, once said, "There's a special place in hell for anyone who puts a scope on a lever gun." While we agree, we recognize that there are some exceptions, like with a Savage 99 or, in some instances, a scout scope. Even though the

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It's a scary fact. Survival food is literally **FLYING** off the shelves. As a matter of fact, I've been hearing reports that survival food is actually sold out in many areas of the country. This has caught most people – including me – totally by surprise. I'd never seen anything like this in my life.

Well, I love a good mystery. So, I started doing some snooping, trying to discover why survival food is disappearing at a record rate? Who's buying it? Where in the world is it going? And what are they planning to do with it all?

Guess what I found out! My digging around paid off. What I found was that a well-known agency, which is actually responsible for aiding Americans in times of crisis, is hoarding it. Literally, hoarding it! From what I can tell, they're stashing it in non-descript warehouses all around the country.

I even have the proof in writing. These people were brazen enough to send an official inquiry asking how much survival food we had, where was it kept, how quickly could they get ahold of it, and more.

Enough was enough! I knew right then that I had an obligation to share my findings with patriots everywhere. This hoarding could have far-reaching effects on all of us, including a nationwide shortage of survival food available for the general population.

I want to help ensure that there is always an adequate supply of survival food available for those who want it. Hell, if you are smart enough to understand that in a crisis, food will quickly become more valuable than gold, then you should be able to get it whenever you chose, with no one stopping you.

Now, you'd better believe the agency is not at all happy that I'm revealing this story. No surprise there. Truth is, they are trying really hard to keep this information from the public to avoid causing panic.

I'm sorry, but I think you deserve to know the truth! I've posted a video online that explains everything you need to know about the looming survival food shortage. Go NOW to **GETFOOD83.COM** Check out my video ... while you still can. As you can imagine, I've been getting some heat over this, and I honestly don't know how much longer I'll be able to continue exposing this top-secret story.

In the meantime, don't worry; I'm doing everything I can to keep our survival food out of this group's hands. Go to GetFood83.com now and I'll show you how you can still get our highest quality Food4Patriots survival food at "fire sale" prices – as low as \$1.39 per serving – but only if you act fast.



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Like Marlin 1894s of the past, the newly engineered version sports a dovetailed leaf, semi-buckhorn rear sight and hooded front.

1894 is drilled and tapped for scope bases, we felt that attaching an optic to this fast-handling fire stick would make about as much sense as putting a saddle on a cat.

That means that all testing was conducted with the factory open sights, and the bench testing was conducted at 50 instead of 100 yards. This shorter range was dictated by a front sight that appeared to be almost invisible, which made it rather difficult to line up on target while keeping it in the notch of the semibuckhorn rear blade. Also, we consider the .44 Magnum cartridge, as powerful as it is in a carbine, to still be a short-range tool. Zeroed at 50 yards, it's 8 inches low at 150.

This is not a rifle; it is a quick-handling carbine designed for putting lots of energy on targets fast. We found this



The Marlin 1894 has a long-standing reputation for reliability and ruggedness. Marlin has seemingly brought all that back with a level of precision that has been missing with this brand for some time.

new Marlin averaged 2½ inches at 50 yards from a sandbag rest. We also found that from the seated position at 100 yards, all shots could be placed inside an 8-inch circle.

To see how handy the little carbine was when rushed, the Marlin was run through Richard Mann's, a frequent G&A contributor, Scout Rifle Workout (SRW) drill five times. For this drill, you fire one round standing, one kneeling, one sitting and one from the prone position in 30 seconds. The goal is to put every shot within a 5-inch circle at 50 yards. Three of the five runs were clean, attempt number one resulted in two misses, and attempt number three produced one. Average time: 26 seconds.

The little rifle will certainly shoot, and in 250 rounds not a single issue was experienced. The lever was butter smooth, and the trigger was not bad, though it had an infinitesimal amount of takeup. It broke crisply at a surprising 3 pounds, with just a bit of overtravel. By lever-gun standards, it could be considered exceptional.

Aging eyes will likely not enjoy shooting the 1894 with the factory sights. We'd consider replacing them with an XS Sights' aperture at the rear along with one of its white-striped post front sights. If nothing else, we'd recommend throwing the front sight hood in a keepsake box. It will likely work loose after about 30 full-power loads. (Ours did.)

Marlin tells us this is one of the first guns off the line and that it's representative of the quality consumers can expect. If that's true, there's no question that the 1894 is back; it's just a matter of which variation will be perfected next. We've been craving another Marlin, an 1894 in .357 Magnum. Lundgren says the company has almost got the bugs worked out of one chambered for .38 Special/.357 Magnum. It and a .45 Colt Cowboy version should be available by year's end. That's a good thing; like Marlin, it's time we all found our way back into a saddle with a lever gun in the scabbard. **GA**

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2015

2 MARCH

- There's a lot more interesting history on suppressors to learn about as we show an old Colt Woodsman .22 with its original suppressor.
- Check out Stag's new 9mm carbines along with Smith & Wesson's new M&P9 pistol.
- We test a suppressed Smith & Wesson M&P15 in .223 given a threaded barrel.

2015

9 MARCH

- SIG Sauer's cutting-edge P320 conversion kit is a special package for the striker-fired modular pistol, and we see how different setups change its personality at the range.
- A recognized name from the World War II era is back. For 2015, Inland Manufacturing reintroduces the M1 Carbine as it was produced in the 1940s. It's almost an exact reproduction of the .30-caliber original, and it's available with a folding stock.

2015

16 MARCH

- Ruger's ever-popular Gunsight Scout Rifle is examined, which is chambered in a new caliber: .223. It is also being offered with a threaded barrel for suppression.
- Next up is an overview of significant advancements coming from Leupold in 2015. Leupold introduces its Light Collimating Optic, or LCO, to the G&A team. Curious what this optic has to offer? Tune in for this exclusive report.
- What suppressor is best for you? We jump right into the mix of what's available.

2015

23 MARCH

- The word "subsonic" is one of the more misunderstood terms in the shooting lexicon. G&A explains standard versus subsonic loads by highlighting Black Hills' 9mm factory-loaded options.
- We address the often-overlooked topic of magazines and improvements made to them in the last few years, as well as offer reviews on a suppressed semiauto rifle with a .22-caliber, carbon fiber barrel.
- Rounding things out is a selection of new gear from Blackhawk that falls beneath the banner "Under the Radar," products that prevent the loss of personal information.

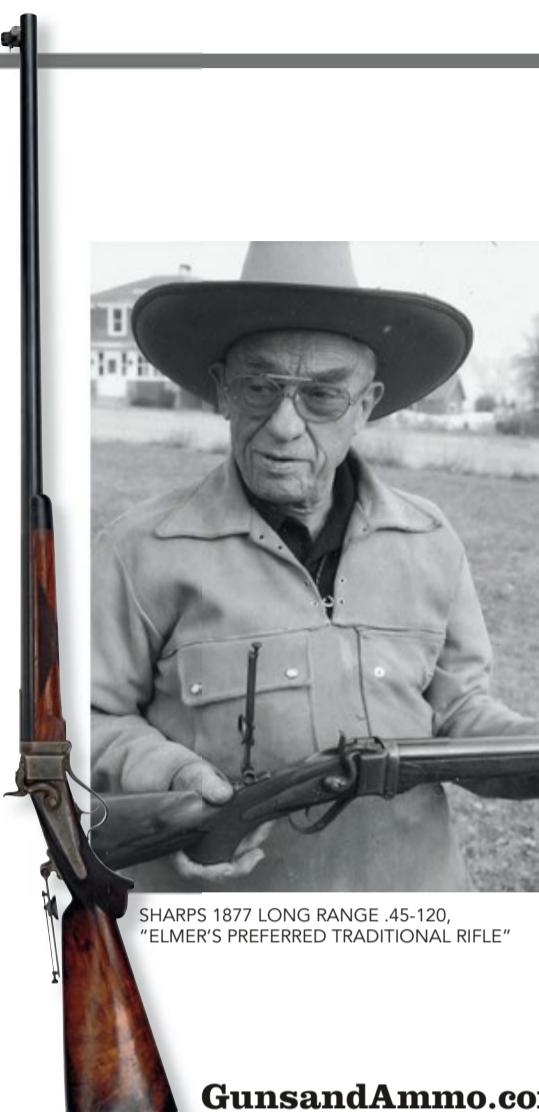
2015

30 MARCH

- Have you ever seen a flame lick the end of a suppressor due to high-volume shooting? Guns & Ammo has this phenomenon captured in high definition as Patrick Sweeney runs an AR until it glows, steams and smokes. Things get as hot as fire.
- We also highlight two new guns hitting the market: Smith & Wesson's compact M&P22 pistol and SIG Sauer's 556 in 7.62x39, a cartridge that is recently regaining considerable momentum among shooters.
- This week's show is finished off with a couple of compact personal defense guns as we look at the best way to protect yourself.

Monday 9:00 p.m.
Monday 11:00 p.m.
Tuesday 5:00 p.m.
Wednesday 6:30 a.m.

AIR TIMES ARE EASTERN

SHARPS 1877 LONG RANGE .45-120,
"ELMER'S PREFERRED TRADITIONAL RIFLE"

The Guns of Elmer Keith

This issue previewed a few examples of more than 140 pieces being offered for sale by the Elmer Keith Estate Collection through James D. Julia Auctions on March 13-15, 2015. See what Keith's guns finally sold for online after this epic event.

GunsandAmmo.com/elmer-keith-auction

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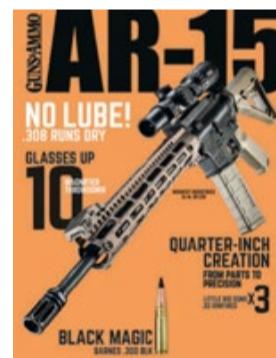
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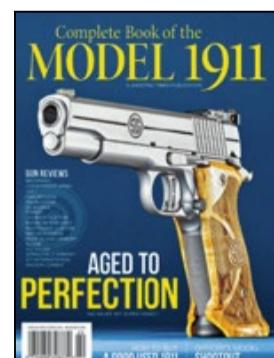
GUN DOG

- CZ's Model 920
- Training Dogs to Recover Wounded Birds
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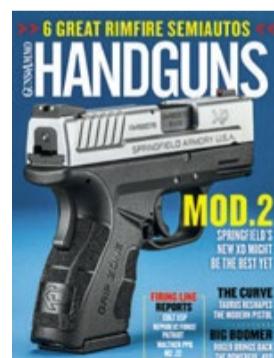
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- Magnifier Comparo
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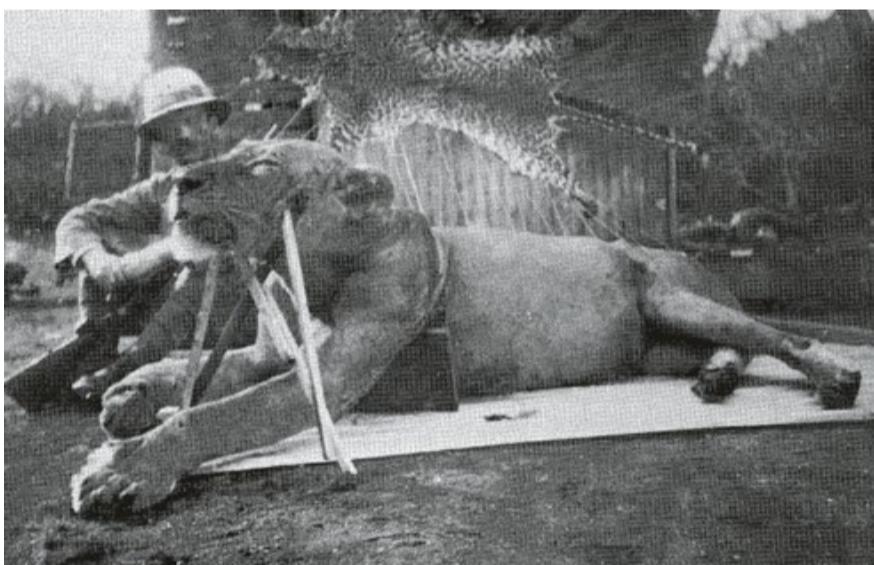
MAN-EATING LIONS

LT. COL. JOHN H. PATTERSON led a British engineering project in 1898 to build a bridge that crossed the Tsavo River in Kenya for the Uganda railway. However, two maneless lions terrorized the campsites shortly after his arrival in March, killing 135 African and Indian laborers, by Patterson's account.

Though unsuccessful for nine months, Patterson finally shot and killed the first lion on December 9, 1898, wounding him with a Martini-Enfield chambered for .303 and ultimately killing the male with a .303 Martini-Henry. Twenty days later, the second lion was brought down only after absorbing six bullets over several days and three encounters. Work on the Tsavo bridge quickly resumed, and the story has captivated the world for more than a century. He published his accounts in a 1907 book titled "The Man-Eaters of Tsavo."

In 1924, Col. Patterson delivered a public lecture at the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, Illinois, retelling the details of these events. Afterward, he indicated to the museum's president, Stanley Field, that he still possessed the skins of the two lions and offered them for sale. Mr. Stanley purchased the lion hides for \$5,000.

Col. Patterson had used the pelts as floor rugs since stopping the lions' reign of terror 25 years earlier. With great difficulty, the museum was able to construct full-body



FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

mounts. It is estimated that the size of the lions has been reduced in comparison with their original state due to the fact that the skins were initially trimmed.

The lions remain on permanent display along with their skulls, but the Tsavo lions are not the only man-eaters at the Chicago's Field Museum. The Man-Eater of Mfuwe, also maneless, terrorized residents of Zambia's Luangwa River Valley in 1991. Wayne Hosek, a former resident of Chicago, killed the lion while on safari. Upon news of the Mfuwe lion's death, local residents came from the village to spit at and beat the carcass with sticks. It is the largest man-eater on record. **G&A**

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